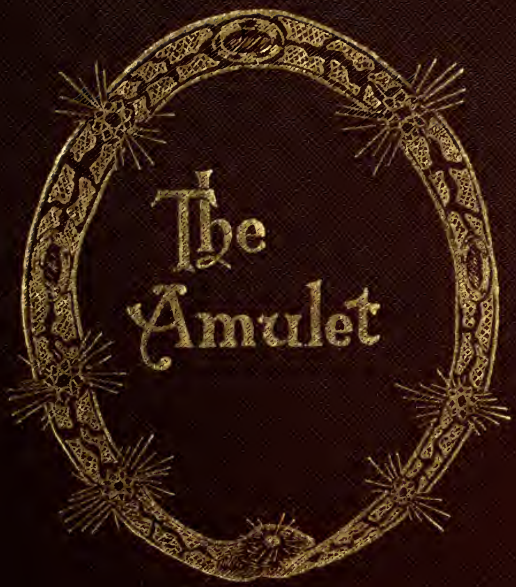
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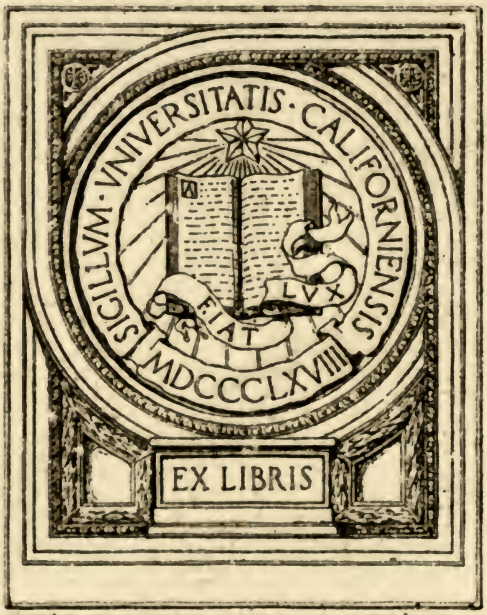

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THE AMULET

A Tale of the Orient

BY

KATHARINE TREAT BLACKLEDGE

1916

COMMERCIAL PRINTING HOUSE

LOS ANGELES, CAL.

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Katharine Treat Blackledge

Class of 1897

To those sisters and brothers of the world, who are
seeking Light upon the Riddle of Life,
these pages are dedicated

344860

In the preparation of this tale, I am indebted to many works, especially

"The Opening of Tibet"
by Col. Younghusband

"Three Years in Tibet"
by Ekai Kawaguchi

"Across Tibet"
by Gabriel Bonvalot

"Kashmir and the Ladak"
by Nicolas Notovitch

Also to numerous works on Oriental religions and Astrology

THE AUTHOR

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Illustrations by Miss Evelyn Hess
and W. A. Sharp

'Tis but as when one layeth
  His worn out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth
  "These will I wear today!"
So putteth by the Spirit
  Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
  A residence afresh.

—*Sir Edwin Arnold.*

From Sunset to Sunrise

KATHARINE TREAT BLACKLEDGE

I

Oh years that are no more!
The sunset glow of evening
Now lights your distant shore;
While ever on my dreaming,
The waves of life's relentless sea,
Break endlessly 'twixt you and me.
Oh years that are no more!
Oh light that never shone
On land or sea or sky;
The treasures that were all my own
In your dim radiance, buried lie,
Upon that fading shore.

II

The birds' sweet notes of vanished June
Died into silence ere life's noon;
The scented lilac, and the rose
All withered lie, at evening's close;
And those loved voices I have known
Are silenced too; their silver tones
But echoes now, upon my listening ear.
Those faded flowers of life's fair morn,
Those forms and faces once so near,
Dim thro' the mist of lengthening years,
Flit only in my dreams, across the screen
Within whose shadow, memory sits and mourns.

III

Come they no more? those cherished ones?
  Passed they, like moonlight o'er the sea?
A few short hours, and then black night?
  No moon, no stars, no hope, no light?
Ah no! Deep in the soul, a voice speaks low to me,
  "From out the Central Flame, all life has sprung
And cannot die; they *live,* the deathless, ever *young,*
  Beyond the thin, thin veil; grieve then no more."
And they *will* come again—again—
  As they *have* come, so oft before;
With intuition I shall know them, when
  Upon some later life, they smile once more.

IV

Some perfume faint, from fields Elysian,
  Will float upon the summer night;
Some wandering strain, from harp Aeolian
  Will sweep across my sleeping soul;
Some haunting face, will cross my vision
  Till backward, all the waves of memory roll;
And I shall see, with understanding eyes
  Down the long vista, that behind me lies,
A far reaching chain, of oft succeeding lives,
  In which the flesh against the spirit strives;
And every life, my treasures hold,
  Like beads upon a Rosary told.

V

'Tis then at last, the truth shall seem
That death alone, is the illusive dream;
That spirit wakes beyond the veil,
To rest, while it recounts life's long, sad tale;
And gleans its lesson, from the evolving years.
With recognition strange, yet clear,
These pilgrims shall again be known.
My eager soul shall grasp and hold
These loved and lost of other lives.
They have *returned;* they are my own;
Remembered voices of the silver tones;
Those vanished faces, known of old.

VI

Oh years that are again in tune,
With freshness of life's morn;
Oh birds that sing again in June;
And rose with fragrance of the dawn.
Oh light of youth, that shines once more
On sea and sky and shore.
This is the pilgrimage of soul,
That journeys upward to its goal;
Oh *drops* from out the Ocean's brim,
Oh *rays* that start, and live in Him,
Return we all, thro' countless years,
Thro' Cycles long, to our Eternal Sphere.

Introduction

Two thousand years ago there lived in the city of Babylon a wise man, known in those days as an astrologer. Men of his profession were reverenced for their learning, and their sage counsels were followed alike by kings and people. Their prophecies were indeed fulfilled in a wonderful manner, although the materialist of today would scoff and sneer at such credulity.

But there is a wisdom even beyond that of the most advanced scientist. This wisdom is the direct result of the teaching of the higher powers, but has been lost to the world for many centuries, owing to the increasing materialism of the race. Man has gradually discarded the teachings of his ancestors of the dim past, who, however, held the truth as we do not hold it today. The western world has wandered far from it, and in their egotism allude to the early wisdom as "superstition."

A celebrated physiologist has said that acquired capacity is transmitted by generations, and is more certain and perfect as the cultivation has extended over more generations. Herodotus, the "Father of

History" to the western people (who as a rule know nothing of the literature of India, and care less), mentions the heritage of caste, of profession, and of moral and intellectual qualities which are transmitted to the descendants of the sages.

Men of India understand why so many more really great psychologists and philosophers have flourished in these old oriental countries than in our own material west. In our own country the climate, the animal food, the stimulating beverages, have developed the animal nature at the expense of the spiritual, since the exodus of the people from the ancient east to settle in western lands. Generations of men pass away here, without producing one so-called adept, one great master of those old secret sciences, while in the India of today there are living, wonderful persons of advanced knowledge and experience. They have returned to help the race, life after life of abstemious and spiritual living. Their work is done unobtrusively and without desire for earthly reward. The western world is waking, lately, to a realization of its ignorance, and many are seeking inspiration from that divine fount which was opened for man when the world-cycle was beginning.

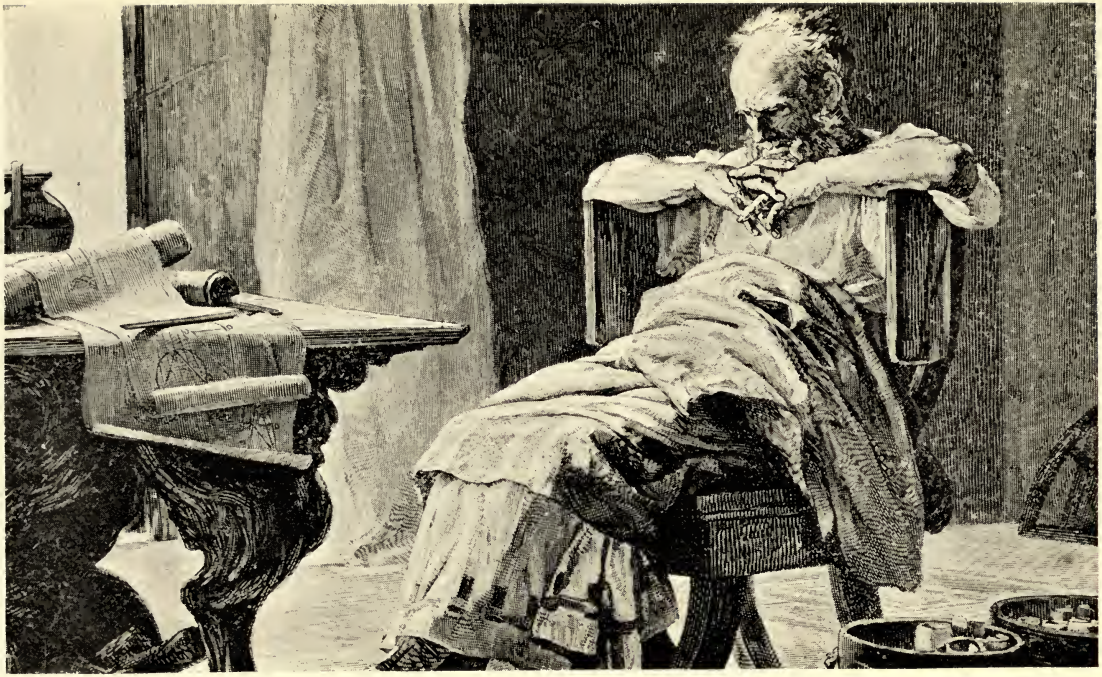
So the Persian Empire, coming out of Egypt, brought with it wonderful recollections of a prehistoric age. Strange tales were told of divine ancestors who had peopled the earth when first it was reflected into being, with the rest of our universe, by a power which must remain unknown till man shall progress infinitely beyond his present state of

spirituality. We, having descended into the lowest depths of materiality, are now on the upward grade. We are returning to our spiritual homes, enriched by the experiences through which our souls have passed. For this, the wise, deep students (of a lore for which the great majority of men have no time) believe to be the scheme of the universe.

The student of occultism knows that the adepts, the great masters of India, have the truth, and possess a knowledge of nature's laws. That by their spiritual lives they have developed a sixth sense which gives them power beyond the ordinary man, though he, too, as he studies and develops and lives abstemiously and spiritually, shall one day follow in the path of the illustrious brotherhood. In the course of cycles the mass of men will have become so educated and developed that a new school of religion and science will rule all civilization. And the cornerstone of this occult religion will be philanthropy, for occult wisdom seeks not its own; it aims to benefit humanity.

Adepts, masters, mahatmas, have long possessed complete knowledge of all that modern science is endeavoring to discover. And there are *born* astrologers; there are *born* magicians; yes, even mediums, as certainly as there are born poets, painters, sculptors and musicians. Great psychical power often passes down the generations in families. The wise men of the ancients, their sooth-sayers and augurs, occupied the same position in that old civilization that is now occupied by our historians, astronomers,

and meteorologists, and it was no more wonderful then that there should be predicted the fate of a nation or of an individual, than today is the foretelling of the return of a comet or a great change in temperature within a few hours.



THE ASTROLOGER OF BABYLON

"And in that far off time,
Thou shalt be I; when I am cold and dead
Thou shalt take up again, life's silver thread.
For thou shalt live in flesh again,
Unconscious of this life's grief or pain."

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The Oriental Lovers

And thus it was that Babylon had its astrologers. But now the night is falling above the great and ancient city; it is the evening of a long past day. The Wise Man, leaving his modest dwelling by the River Euphrates, in the outskirts of the metropolis, walks to and fro, gazing often upon the water, and again upon the sky.

It is in the spring time. Sweet scented flowers perfume all the air; and, as in our own time, the youths and maidens walk slowly in the moonlight, their hearts turning ever to dreams of love. To the Wise Man came many a couple to know the predictions of the stars. Some returned with joyful hearts to a happy future; while, alas, upon others the planets frowned, some malevolent aspect having presided at their birth.

The night of which we write, a couple of lovers sought the prophet as he drew near his door. Wrapped in a long cloak of black velvet, whose lining was of a wine-colored satin, the maiden's attire betokened the highest social position, aside from her haughty manner. Her features were concealed by

a filmy veil through which eyes of midnight darkness alone were visible; she spoke slowly, with a reverential demeanor, and yet with an assurance which indicated rank. "Oh, Wise Man, tell us, we beg of thee, what is the fate before us; thou readest the stars; we desire to know our future!" "Yes, learned father," added her companion, "tell us the truth, whether good or evil." The young man's countenance denoted a proud yet manly nature, but his dress showed that he belonged to a different rank from that of the maiden—that of an officer of the guards, who kept watch over the palace and its courtyards.

The Astrologer motioned them to a seat on a bench beside his door. Then making a few inquiries as to date of birth, he entered his dwelling and, seated at a table, began to reckon degrees and positions upon a zodiacal chart. Casting his eyes often through the door to the starry heavens, he would remain for moments in deepest thought. At last a serious, saddened look settled upon his countenance, and he arose and came to the young couple who waited outside.

"My children," said he, "I would that I might predict for you a happy fate, but the stars have decreed otherwise. The daughter of a great king may not marry one of lower degree. Not in this incarnation may you be united; it was not to be; but you know the soul has other lives upon this earth; you will *return*, to a more favorable karma, which you will then have earned, twenty centuries from this."

Consternation spread over the faces of the young couple and they were apparently speechless with grief.

"You must know, my children," continued the astrologer, "that the object of these many mortal incarnations is not happiness, but the progress of the soul; and yet such is your karma that in that far-off day you *will* be united for a few brief years; nor will it seem to you in the heaven world more than a night until the dawn of that other life. You will rest and learn while the ages roll away, and awake, as it were, on the morrow's dawn, to the breaking of that happier day."

As the pallid and grief-stricken lovers rose to depart, the princess, for it was she, paused and said, "Oh, Wise Man, I perceive that nothing is hidden from thee, for thou hast read our souls; but give us a sign, some token by which, in that distant dream of happiness, in that far-off life, we may know each other—we may remember this, the existence of today."

"Princess," replied the wise man, "recollection of our previous incarnations is attained only by a highly spiritual development. The soul must earn this remembrance, but I foresee that in the youth of that later existence you and your lover will attain this memory. For a few brief moments, on some eventful day, together your souls will travel back through the centuries and you will live again in spirit this sad night, and then, returning to your new found life, you will take the recollection with you. It shall be lost no more. Henceforth you will remember

each successive life as it follows, link after link, in the long, long chain. And, Princess, beneath your cloak, around your neck, you wear a strange and wondrous necklace of jewels rare, a talisman of kings. It hath descended through a long line of ancestors. It hath an evil record, for it works ill to those who understand it not. And it will work tonight. Yet will it reunite you in that other life to him you love."

Then, wrapping his somber robe around him, the astrologer withdrew to the solitude of his lowly cottage. A far-seeing look was in his eyes. It was the look of the advanced soul, old through living many lives. His spirit heeded not the present. It saw the end of the weary road that all younger souls must travel. He saw these two, happy in that later day, and his gaze rested not even there, but reached beyond to the shining hills of immortality.

The Princess Hamurai, daughter of the king Nebuchadrezzar, and her lover Cyrus, officer of the palace guards, turned homeward, leaving behind them their youth, their hopes, at the door of the humble dwelling beside the Euphrates. They turned city-wards and threaded their way beside reed-grown canals until the palace loomed not far away.

"Here must we part," said the maiden; "go thou on alone. But stay! take with thee this necklace; it *is* an amulet, but works no evil to those who no longer care for life. And you heard the Wise Man say it shall reunite us in that other life." "Keep thou it," replied her lover; "it may be I shall meet

thee in that day, wearing this necklace on thy neck." "I would not linger in this existence," sadly spoke the maiden; "the canal here is deep; why not die tonight? Let us dream through the long centuries, unconscious of their passage, oblivious of our sorrow till the day breaks again for us as the Wise Man said."

"I am with thee, my loved one," said her lover; "let it be as thou hast said. I know the star may not look toward the sun. The distinction of rank lies between us here. But death levels all, even the crowns of kings, and I may be thy equal then. Farewell, my Princess! To wait for me thou goest. Soon I come! Within my faithful heart thy memory keeps its home; until the dawn of that blest day I see, the day I wait for, that gives thee back to me."

Then the king's daughter threw off her long concealing cloak. She took the jeweled necklace from her neck and cast it among the reeds upon the bank. One long sigh she gave, and flung herself into the deep canal. The officer of the king's guard waited not. He stretched his arms toward the mighty city, whose lights were faintly shining in the distance "Oh, Babylon! Babylon!" he cried, "my dream of love and wealth and power is ended!" Then the canal of the Euphrates closed over his form also, as he sank into its depths.

In the distance, lights of the great city were twinkling from myriads of oriental lanterns. The wonderful hanging gardens were alive with bloom and heavy fragrance of the night. Gay and happy

voices of the young, rythmical cadences of music, the music of cymbal and many ancient instruments, denoted that dancing and other merriment was at its height, though the midnight hour had come. But for two of those, who once took part in these festivities, a darker, deeper night had fallen, and Babylon, city of magnificent revelry, would know them henceforth nevermore.

And yet the object of these mortal lives is not happiness, but progress of the soul. The king's daughter was proud and selfish, loving nothing but her own; heedless of the bitter sorrows, the want and stern privation of those below her position. And her lover, too, was of unyielding, even cruel, ambition. He longed to rise above his station and sit upon a throne. To gain this lofty height he would trample upon the dead body of a friend. A happier, wiser lot for them, to be removed from scenes that dim the spirit's vision, that retard its upward trend. Now in the heaven world and in their lives to follow, they would learn the lesson they had failed in here. The dross of earthly pride and false ambition must burn away until but the gold of truth remain. The flesh must suffer, yes, be crucified, till *self is dead.*

The moon rose slowly over the canals of the Euphrates river. Perhaps it saw beneath the water the pale faces of the unfortunate lovers. But its cold and silvery beams fell also upon a strange Egyptian necklace lying upon the bank. A sinuous serpent necklace of flaming rubies and of opals, shading from

white to blue and rose. Its curving length shone balefully from where it coiled among the reeds, changing from rose and white to lurid red and inky blue. It seemed alive, and two emerald eyes glittered like those of a basilisk from an immense opal serpent's head, which formed the necklace clasp. And within the clasp, secreted by a hidden spring, there was a narrow, long papyrus, folded fine and small. On this thin roll was written the names of many kings, for it had come down a long line to this last king of Babylon. Within was written, too, the secret of the working of the amulet. In Egyptian hieroglyphics lay the knowledge of its power for good or evil.

When this was found upon the water's edge, and the canal revealed its tragic tale, they brought the necklace to the king. But the bereaved monarch refused to look upon it more, for often had its work been ill; this was the last of his line upon whom the curse should fall. "Take it to the Temple," he commanded, "and there the prayers of the holy priests may bring its accursed workings to an end."

* * * *

Twenty centuries rolled away. Mighty cities fell, and their historic stones were buried deep within the earth. Other nations rose, waxed great and famous. Then they, too, waned, and disappeared. But at last, in another portion of the world, the weird Egyptian amulet, the serpent necklace, was found again.

"It was ages ago, in life's first wonder,
I found you, Virgilia, wild sea-heart;
And 'twas ages ago we went asunder,
Ages and worlds apart.

Your lightsome laugh, and your hair's dark glory,
I knew them of old, by some ocean stream;
In a far first world, now turned to story,
Now faded back to dream.

We are caught in the coil of a world's romances,
We come from high worlds, and we go afar;
I have missed you again, in the Earth's wild chances,
Now, to another star.

Perhaps we are led, and our lives are fated,
And our steps are counted, one by one.
Perhaps we shall meet, and our souls be mated,
After the burnt-out sun.

There are more lives yet; there are more worlds waiting,
For the Way climbs up to the eldest sun.
. . . . . .
How eagerly then, will the poor heart pardon
All of the hurts of Time.

I will find you there, where our low life heightens,
Where the door of the wonder again unbars;
Where the old love lures, and the old fire whitens,
In the Stars, beyond the Stars."

—Edwin Markham.

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CYRUS, OFFICER OF THE KING'S GUARDS

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PRINCESS HAMURAI

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Chapter I.

Planning an Expedition into a Strange Country

In the Spring of 19— there was gathered in the reception room of one of the large hotels of Calcutta, India, a party of a dozen persons considering a somewhat unusual expedition. There is nothing unusual, it is true, in a cosmopolitan set of people making a trip to China or Japan, or even to Timbuctoo, provided they take with them a first rate Cook's tourist conductor. But to start to a country hitherto almost unexplored or rarely visited by Europeans was a rather extraordinary and venturesome undertaking.

The thing which had inspired these seasoned travelers, for such they were, the majority of them, was a glowing and thrilling report which had been brought back by a party of English officials who a year or two before this had been sent out by their government from India to make investigations as to the feasibility of building a great highway into the now nearly inaccessible country of Tibet, a province or, at that time, a dependency of China, but bordering on India, also, to which the lofty Himalayas' frozen peaks formed an almost insurmountable barrier.

The project had not, as yet, been carried out, but the commissioned expedition, notwithstanding some

warlike demonstrations from the inhabitants, had so far succeeded as to convince the common people of their good will, and had received civility, at least, from the religious and political officers of the great capital city of L'hasa, or Lassa, as it is more generally called.

The priests and subordinates of the Grand Lama, who is the ruling religious authority, have a jealous suspicion, not easily overcome, of all foreigners. This was owing, in a measure, to several attempts in previous years by English and other foreigners to establish Christian missions in their country.

These attempts were frustrated and the zealous missionaries barely escaped with their lives from the hands of the indignant worshippers of Buddha—the great incarnated teacher whose precepts governed their lives. But to this recent government expedition they had appeared outwardly friendly. When, therefore, it was quietly hinted that another exploring party was soon to start, though much smaller in numbers than was the first one, it resulted in several independent and venturesome travelers applying for permission to accompany it.

Women were not supposed to go on what, at best, would be a severe trip. But Colonel Browne's wife insisted upon accompanying her husband, who was the senior officer in command of the party. She was a strong, healthy woman of nearly fifty years, and liked adventure. Several of the stewards, cooks, and other domestics employed for the trip, were also taking their wives along as general assistants. Among

these latter was a Hindoo woman of fifty years, who accompanied Mrs. Browne in the capacity of maid; a quiet, reliable, faithful and devoted servant.

Last of all a Russian traveler, lecturer, and collector of curios, named Kozlov, applied for membership and asked to take with him his daughter, who was the only relative he seemed to have in the world, and who was his secretary and assistant in all his business affairs. This man was called Count Kozlov. No one knew by what right he assumed this title, whether it had been inherited or conferred upon him.

His daughter made no use of any title, whatever. Irene Kozlov was unassuming and retiring in demeanor, and her twenty-four years seemed more like twenty. She had, however, in apparent contradiction to these traits, a stateliness of bearing approaching almost to queenliness. One felt in her company, in spite of her quiet manner, that they stood in the presence of some oriental princess. She had an Egyptian look, much more than Russian. Dark, luminous eyes gave a rather serious expression to a face of a clear pallor. There had been a kind of tragedy in her short life, one felt, when with her. She said but very little, especially in the presence of her father. She was apparently on her guard in conversation with every one. Though Mrs. Browne had become greatly interested in her, yet little could she learn of her childhood or early life.

The Count and his daughter had spent only the previous winter in Calcutta, having come there from a small town in Russia, yet a town not far from

the great capital, where the Count had been engaged in some little understood business, involving mysterious transactions. If his daughter had any knowledge of this secret business, she never spoke of it. And when, just before their leaving Russia, her old childhood's nurse died suddenly and strangely, she then lost her last real friend.

As for the Count, the death relieved *him* of the constant surveillance of one who knew more about him than he wished. This old nurse had been the devoted attendant of Irene's mother. Her sudden, unexpected demise, at the time they were preparing to leave Russia, had prevented her accompanying them, and removed considerable danger of any of the Count's strange dealings becoming known. In fact, there was much gossip, and many sinister hints concerning her death, casting veiled suspicions upon the Count himself.

Irene's melancholy expression might have resulted from some knowledge, or secret fear, at least, of which she dare not speak. Count Kozlov posed, while in Calcutta, as a sociological lecturer, even as a kind of philanthropist. But there were those who mistrusted his motives and accused him of schemes for increasing his own welfare by enlisting wealthy men in his projects, one of which was to benefit his fellow man, especially the working class.

He lectured every month in a large hall, and proved an interesting speaker. At the close of each lecture he took up a collection for some distant mythical society, which he claimed was investing funds for

the working class, to receive as pensions in their old age.

His daughter usually appeared upon the platform at the lectures and rendered beautiful selections upon the violin, either at the opening or closing, or both, of the entertainments. She came in through a side door upon the stage, dressed in a simple, yet rich, costume, generally of white. Her manner indicated a shrinking from publicity; yet when she became absorbed in her playing she forgot everything else. The audience likewise became so wrapt and spell-bound that the most intense silence followed the close of her performance. Then after a moment would come vociferous applause. The young woman would sometimes acknowledge this with an encore, and sometimes only by a bow.

Irene Kozlov believed herself to be the Count's own daughter, but the truth had been kept from her by him. Neither had he permitted her old nurse to tell her that she really was the daughter of his wife by a previous marriage. His wife's first husband had left a considerable fortune, which descended to Irene at her mother's death. Her mother dying when she was but a child, had left her stepfather as her guardian until her twenty-fifth birthday, when the whole was to come into her possession. In case of Irene's death without marrying before this age, it then reverted to her stepfather. She grew up from childhood supposing him to be her own father, and accustomed to seeing him control what she supposed was his own fortune.

For reasons of her own, his wife had allowed her child to regard the Count as her father. Also, she had permitted him to assume the title belonging to her first husband; and this was the origin of his supposed rank. No doubt his wife had feared him, as did all with whom he had any close association.

He had come to India as a refuge from the suspicion and surveillance which had for some time been following him in Russia. And even here occasional rumors were sometimes started in some unknown manner as to crimes committed in the capital of Russia. Crimes they were which seemed always to have been perpetrated by some master mind which had hypnotized others into the actual doing of the deeds. The tools, or slaves, of this shrewd originator of the whole business had been caught and had received punishment for what they had been influenced to do, even though they understood not that they had been so influenced. But the real instigator had thus far escaped. Nothing could be proved against him.

And so the Count and his daughter lived quietly, during the winter months, at one of the best hotels in Calcutta. He was often seen, though, at entertainments of the social world, for he had an object in meeting the rich. With his daughter, however, it was different. Although of an attractive character, she shunned publicity and social life. She made no friends and few acquaintances. There was but one interest in her life during her stay in Calcutta, and this caused much comment among the English mem-

bers of society there. Every week, and sometimes oftener, she would visit the barracks of the Salvation Army, playing her violin at their meetings and occasionally taking part in the addresses. She seemed to be much beloved by the officers and members of this worthy organization, as well as by those who attended their services. Many a sailor lad frequented these gatherings, and listening to her playing of simple melodies and well known hymns, was carried far away in mind to his old home and absent mother, until the tears streamed down his face. Many a poor woman, many a down-and-out man, received encouragement to start again in the hard struggle of life, and follow the narrow path of right living until the end.

When the addresses were over, she would go down among them and speak a kind word here and there, or give such financial relief as she found necessary. Many a visit, too, was made by her among the poor and suffering of the city.

Yet, Irene Kozlov was a beautiful and cultivated young woman, whom the fashionable residents of Calcutta would gladly have welcomed to their own innermost circles. She had wealth, besides, which is the great open sesame to that frivolous butterfly existence which is carried on by those called the "smart set." A sad misnomer, indeed, and a most cynical reflection, seemingly, upon the real people of brains, whose lives are given to the attainment of higher objects than becoming popular members of the social world; whose time is given to the doing of great

things, or at least to the thinking of great thoughts which may ripen into deeds of benefit to the race.

However, the gay and thoughtless butterfly may have its mission in the far-reaching eternal plan. Nor should those criticise who, by birth, training, or love of humanity, have been gifted with deeper minds, and a greater insight into the meaning of life.

When invited to take part in any of the gay life of Calcutta, Irene only declined quietly. Once, however, when urged to attend some great carnival given for charity, she said, "A woman who is progressing has no time for what is called 'society;' and charity that must be stimulated or goaded into operation by some return of pleasure, or by benefit to the bestower of it, is unworthy of the name. True charity will go quietly to help the needy, will bestow gladly the funds necessary, without balls, suppers, and selfish festivities."

This was almost the only instance in which Irene spoke her mind, and it was on the evening referred to, at the gathering in the hotel, to consider the anticipated journey. There were persons present at this assembly who objected to Miss Kozlov's ascetic views. One of these was Archbishop Wyndham, a high prelate of the Episcopal Church in this diocese. With him were two young persons, who were the same as son and daughter to him. They were all friends of Colonel and Mrs. Browne, and though two of them had no intention of joining the expedition, yet they had come, at the Colonel's request, to spend the evening, and to listen to the plans.

Planning an Expedition

Stephen Wyndham was the Archbishop's adopted son, the child of an old friend who had died twenty years before, leaving the boy of eight or nine years alone in the world. The Archbishop had taken the orphan as his own, had given him every advantage, and educated him as a physician. In fact, he had only recently completed his medical studies.

The other young person with the prelate was his niece, Mary Hamilton, who had also been left a penniless orphan some ten years previous to this time. She was the only child of the Archbishop's only sister, and she was, like Stephen, as his very own.

On these two his hopes were set, and he had a deeply laid and a long cherished plan that they should eventually marry and inherit his wealth when he should have put earthly things aside. This fortune, partly inherited and partly acquired, he had carefully invested for their benefit. Stephen had realized his adopted father's purpose, and at first had not felt any objection to it. As for Mary, she had always regarded Stephen as her dearest friend and closest companion, and the arrangement which she, too, had surmised was, in her uncle's mind, met with her complete approval. She had never thought of any one else in the light of a husband.

There was a young lieutenant in Colonel Browne's company, who was present tonight. His name was George Rolston, and he, too, had been a friend of hers and Stephen's for many years. Not knowing of her uncle's plan for her, and not realizing that

Mary was rather young yet to know her own mind, as she was barely twenty years of age, Rolston had hazarded a proposal of marriage to her lately, only to be met with a decided refusal. He was a sensitive fellow and was very greatly disappointed. Tonight he hovered near Mary, much as the moth circles around the flame, the prospect of a long separation increasing his melancholy.

A dark cloud, however, was looming upon the Archbishop's horizon and threatening to frustrate all his plans. During the winter just passed he had become aware that Stephen frequently spent his evenings at the hotel where the Brownes as well as the Kozlovs were staying. He had also discovered that Stephen had several times attended meetings of the Salvation Army at their barracks.

Knowing of Miss Kozlov's strange interest in these eccentric people, he had become suspicious of the attraction which might be drawing his adopted son so far beyond the pale of his own aristocratic limitations.

The Archbishop was a very good, a very pious man, but the Salvation Army was not in his social atmosphere. He had no doubt that they would all eventually be permitted to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and would be comfortably settled there, in their own private and peculiar quarters. But neither in this world nor in the next could he bring himself to contemplate the possibility of his most exclusive self being in too close proximity to these good but overzealous people.

Planning an Expedition

Heaven, he had always understood, would have its congenial circles, even as has our little world. It might lack the innocent amusements which here have engaged the attention of the fashionable church to which he belonged. Although bridge, and "teas," and other non-intellectual functions would be lacking in that heavenly world, yet no doubt plenty of occupation would be provided there suitable for those who, on this earth, had fitted themselves for nothing of a higher nature; who had certainly developed no great spiritual powers here, but were fairly good people.

He could not put any surveillance on Stephen's actions, neither could he lower his own dignity by going to one of the excitable meetings to see if his suspicions were correct. Therefore, when his niece announced, one evening, that she had been invited to attend a gathering at the Salvation quarters with Colonel and Mrs. Browne, who were going out of curiosity, he very cheerfully gave his consent. But he admonished Mary to be careful not to form any acquaintance with, nor make any engagement relating to any philanthropic work, even with these very worthy but unfashionable people.

Mary did not need this warning, for she had been carefully educated in a sincerely Christian manner as to her duty toward the church, its religious work, and also as to her duty to her own position. She understood the necessity of being very careful in forming acquaintances; but she had also been taught that *money* could remove many a social barrier and

cover a multitude of obvious sins. She had not learned this latter from her uncle, but had gradually imbibed it from her childhood years, from the worldly class in which she had moved.

The Kozlovs had money, and the Brownes were high up in army circles, though they had an unfortunate leaning toward the companionship of people in a way below them, from the viewpoint of their own "set."

So Mary went, and to her surprise beheld Stephen upon the platform and heard him sing to Miss Kozlov's violin accompaniment the gospel hymn, "Where is my wandering boy tonight?" A whole row of sailor lads upon the front seat were in tears. Mary had never seen such a public display of feeling in all her attendance at her uncle's exclusively fashionable church since the days of her earliest recollection.

At first she had been shocked at Stephen's seeking such inferior society, but she was young and had good tendencies, and much enthusiasm, and latent possibilities of high ideals. When she saw Stephen and Irene Kozlov with the men and women of the Salvation Army go down at the close of the meeting and talk with the sailor boys and others, and saw these hopefully changed from the error of their ways, and promising to lead better lives, she almost felt like joining them and adding her efforts to the good cause.

She had nearly forgotten the significance of Stephen's being here with Irene, but she remembered it later, when her uncle inquired regarding the meet-

ing, and his adopted son. And this was one reason for the Archbishop's presence in the hotel reception room, to which we must return.

The expedition had been thoroughly discussed and plans laid for the beginning of the trip to Tibet. They were to start in a week. But not until this evening did the Archbishop learn that Stephen had decided to go with them. Yes, Stephen had convinced himself that he needed a vacation from his studies and his work, that he desired to travel, and that this strange country was the one above all others that he wished to visit. The Archbishop, though disappointed and vexed, could think of no reasonable objection to offer. Stephen did really need a vacation. He would be safe with the Brownes and young Rolston.

About Irene Kozlov, he felt very great trepidation. Her strange social taste, and her severe remark that evening, which he had happened to overhear, about his own dear church and people (at least he felt that it referred to them), all this was very, very unfortunate, in case Stephen really should upset the plans for his future welfare. Not even the fact that the Kozlovs had money could make the idea satisfactory to the good man. But he was forced to accept the situation. And so the day of departure came.

The Archbishop and Mary Hamilton accompanied the party to the station, where they took the train for Darjeeling. They said good-bye, both of them with feelings of uneasiness, as if some change might

be impending which would alter the entire outlook for the future. Lieutenant George Rolston managed to speak to Mary Hamilton alone for a moment. "Mary," he said, "if your feelings ever change, you will let me know, won't you?"

"I do not think they *will* change, George," she replied; "but you are to return in a few months, of course."

"No, Mary; I expect to be sent further, from Tibet out to Kashmir in the west, and perhaps stationed at the English settlement there for years."

"Well, then, George, I shall remember you always as a dear, dear friend," replied the young girl.

With this small comfort, the young man said goodbye and turned reluctantly away.

Rolston felt that his last chance of gaining Mary's love was being removed. It was probable that years would be spent by him at the little military station in Kashmir, where he would end the trip; and many years did indeed pass before these two met again, though they knew it not then.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

GEORGE AND MARY SAYING GOOD-BYE IN THE GARDEN

"If you change your mind, you will let me know, won't you Mary?"

Chapter II.

A Camp Fire in the Himalayas

Thibet, or Tibet, as it is oftener written now, is the highest of all countries, and is called the Ridge Pole of the World.

Its table lands average in height 16,500 feet above the sea; its valleys, even, rise to 12,000, or more. Its mountain passes range from 16,000 to 19,000, while its peaks tower as high as 24,000 feet. Its climate varies so much that travelers differ regarding it. Intense dryness pervades the atmosphere, and it is said that there are really but two seasons; that when winter ends, summer at once begins. Its uplands border the frontier of China, Mongolia and Kashmir.

It is bounded on the north by Turkestan, on the east by China, south by India, west by Kashmir and Ladak. The chief gateway to Tibet is Lachienlu, China. This is the eastern entrance, and is twelve days' journey from Changtu, the capital of Sgechnan Province, on the great road which connects that city with Lassa. But there is another and less known entrance to this strange country on the south—the opening in the high walls of the Himalayas, which majestic range separates it from India.

And so it was, from the station of Siliguri, that our friends took the little train which left Darjeeling daily, 7000 feet up in the mountains.

From here a dusty road leads out, first over the plains, later through a thickly wooded country, and at last through rocky mountains, dizzy precipices, inland lakes, and rushing torrent-like rivers, to the regions of eternal snow. Cuts through narrow passes in the mountains shorten the journey to Lassa, 400 miles distant.

This journey can be made by hard traveling in twelve days. Our party required for it nearly three weeks. After passing through the narrow defile of the Himalayas, which guards and leads into this strange, mysterious land, India was left behind. From here they proceeded by tongas (two-wheeled vehicles), drawn by Tibetan horses, or by yak oxen, whose long manes were decorated with bright ribbons.

As the way grew more difficult, they exchanged these carts for riding on the Tibetan horses. Throughout the journey they camped nightly. At first the ladies of the party were provided for in small station bungalows, scattered along the way; and later, as these disappeared, in the comfortable tents, as the officers, soldiers, and servants had been camping all along.

The bungalows were four wooden walls, with built-in couches and tables. These couches, covered with tiger skins, formed very restful beds for the tired travelers. Everywhere through the scattered

villages, and often on the mountain sides, were seen the long prayer banners of the Tibetan Buddhists, some floating from high poles, others streaming from fences and bushes.

On the mountain sides, too, were great temples and convents. These have prayer wheels, which are turned by the wind, though often these wheels are held by individuals, and kept in motion by the hand. The prayer wheels are filled with written prayers, inscribed on long strips of paper, and every turn of the wheel means a new prayer. Some are kept in perpetual motion by water, so that never ceasing invocations are continually ascending to the great Buddha, whom the Tibetans worship.

Pictures and images of the Buddha and of the Lamas are decorated in brilliant colors. But these temples, convents and images grew fewer as our party rose higher in the mountain region.

Occasionally they met the mail-runners between Lassa and India. These were a curious sight, as they rushed along, the sleigh bells with which they were hung, jingling merrily. This mail service is carried on by relays, for it is a very hard trip. One mail-runner goes seven or eight miles, which is the limit, the stations being that far apart. Here he hands over his bag of mail to the next runner, who awaits his coming, and who has brought, likewise, the mail from the last station of the other end of the government route.

As they neared villages, they met Tibetan boys guiding their oxen at their plowing. Often children

of twelve years were pushing heavy rollers on the roads or fields. For the child of twelve or fourteen years, of the lower class, is as strong as some men in other countries.

The Tibetans whom they met resembled the Chinese somewhat, although their faces, manners, dress and customs are different. All of them seemed very friendly. The first stages of the journey were enlivened by beautiful scenery. Many varieties of highly scented flowers bloomed everywhere. Gorgeous butterflies hovered around them. Birds of brilliant plumage sang entrancingly from trees and bushes. Here a beautiful lake reflected overhanging ferns and shrubs. There a silvery stream starting from some hidden mountain source trickled down the hills and through the green valleys until it burst into a broad and shining expanse in the plains below.

Onward and upward, winding and turning, until at last the violets, the daphnes, the purple iris, the honeysuckle, the magnolia and japonica, the blue Tibetan poppy, and even the red geranium, had disappeared; their delicate beauty being replaced by hardier flora, by vines and creeping plants clinging to the rocky walls, as these grew ever loftier. The days became cooler, and the nights required a fire. Towards the close of the long journey they reached at sunset one evening their camping place, to see all around them the snowy peaks of the Himalayas glowing in the rosy rays of the sinking sun.

They were nearing Lassa. They built an immense

camp fire, and all around it they pitched the tents. At regular intervals outside of the large circle of tents were built outer fires, as precaution against invasion by any kind of intruder.

Irene Kozlov, with the Hindoo woman, Kirza, occupied the tent next to that of the Colonel and Mrs. Browne. At the other side of the circle, Count Kozlov camped with several officers. Stephen Wyndham and George Rolston had a tent near them. After a hearty supper, the officers and Kozlov engaged in a game of cards. Lieutenant Rolston walked backward and forward near the horses, looking them carefully over, and seeing that the coolies attended to their needs. Stephen Wyndham sauntered the entire length of the great encampment until he came to Colonel Browne's tent.

The Colonel and his wife were talking with Irene in front of the tent door. They hailed Stephen and he stopped and conversed with them for half an hour. Then the Brownes withdrew, leaving the young people together. They walked back and forth in the glowing firelight, while the Hindoo woman went noiselessly about, inside the tent, preparing for the night.

It was an impressive occasion. The majestic Himalayas shutting out all the world behind them, were just ahead; a day or two more and they would enter the mysterious Lassa, the home and shrine of Buddhism. And stranger yet, these two, Stephen and Irene, were alone for the first time of their acquaintance.

A silence fell upon them which neither seemed able to break. Stephen had realized before that this girl had an interest for him no other had, or ever would have. Yet, knowing the Archbishop's wishes, he had been undecided how to convey to him the impossibility of their ever being realized. Until he had settled all this with his adopted father, he felt that he could not, he must not, speak to Irene.

And yet this was an unusual, an unexpected opportunity. It almost seemed that it was especially provided for his benefit. It might slip away, and might never come again. Undecided, he could not utter the words that he wished to say. He had made a sacrifice before, at the Archbishop's wish.

How much more was due the man who had given him everything, had made him all that he was? Was there not a limit beyond which there was a duty to himself? Some years before, he had greatly wished to enter a military life. Something drew him to a stirring, active martial career. It seemed as if ancient lineage was prompting him, and urging him on, subconscious memories, perhaps, of old-time wars, of battles, of conquests and deeds of renown.

But his adopted father had opposed this. He had quoted scripture to him about turning weapons of war into implements of usefulness. The Archbishop had said that wars should end, and that arbitration would henceforth settle all questions. He wished Stephen to choose a peaceful career, either the ministry or the medical profession. So Stephen gave

up his own desire and entered a college of medicine, from which he had just graduated.

But in his choice of a wife he felt he would not be influenced. Still he had better wait until he could write to his uncle, at least. He broke the embarrassing silence. "Do you believe in the science of the stars, Miss Kozlov?" "Yes, to some extent," replied Irene. "My father has looked into astrology a little; he says that an etherial essence is cast off by each planet, of its own peculiar kind, and that this essence of the planet that is rising at one's birth influences the destiny of that person for good or evil, according to the nature of the planet, and also according to its position with regard to other planets. Yet he does not believe that it goes beyond the limitations of a man's efforts entirely. He believes one can make his fate better or worse, within certain restrictions. If a man is predestined by his planetary conditions at birth to be wealthy, then that he will be; or if doomed to be a child of poverty, then he will be poor; but by his own efforts he can modify these conditions to a certain extent."

"I have read," said Stephen, "that the Chinese for ages have had the horoscopes of their children cast at birth; that they then choose future companions for their sons and daughters from among those born at about the same time, and whose horoscopes are favorable to, or harmonize with, the horoscopes of their own children. They say these marriages are always happy. They say also in Tibet, at Lassa

especially, this art is in universal use and practiced by those who have made it a study."

"It certainly would be interesting to look into one's future," replied Irene. "Of one thing, however, I am sure, that there are guiding influences beyond our knowledge, which watch over and direct our every movement; that circumstances are created and conditions thrown around us which work for the soul's progress year after year, and life after life. I wish I might be directed to a life work, a field of labor in the world. I have even hoped that these higher powers which guide us would lead me to this mission, somewhere on my journeyings, ever since leaving Russia."

Stephen forgot his resolution to wait for the Archbishop's knowledge and resignation to his actions, or it might be that some influence beyond his control was leading him on to take the first step in the settlement of their destinies, his and this girl's, for this life-day, this present incarnation. The first step is often not the final adjusting of difficulties, but it prepares the way.

"Irene," said he, pausing in his walk and taking her hand, "I, too, have been looking for a life work, my field of labor in the world. Can it be that it lies in a different direction from my old life? Yes, I feel a strange intuition that all behind, ends soon, and that my future lies with you; that the same work waits, very near at hand, for us both.

"Even when I first met you in Calcutta at your father's lecture, as you stood on the platform with

your violin, your playing seemed to touch a slumbering consciousness. Deep in my soul some chord of memory stirred, and woke to life. I felt as if somewhere, sometime, oh, ages ago, perhaps, you and I had met and loved each other before. Do you not feel this, too, and shall not our future be spent together?"

Irene's face had become very pale, while Stephen was speaking, and now she seemed unable to reply. There was an expression upon her countenance as of one renouncing life's greatest and best gift, the offer of a love, she would gladly have accepted if she might. "Mr. Wyndham," said she, "it cannot be; do not ask me; circumstances exist which make it impossible."

"What are those circumstances? Can they not be removed? At least, you love me, do you not?"

"I could have loved you, yes," replied Irene, "had everything in my life been different, it might have been."

"But tell me these reasons; they may be removed. Is it something relating to your father? Surely he would not stand in the way of your happiness. He would not oppose your marrying."

"He would indeed; I know that," replied Irene, "and I cannot leave him. I do not wish to marry while he lives."

"I do not understand how any parent can sacrifice his daughter in such a way; no personal reason of his can excuse such a demand; but I shall not resign you easily; I shall still hope."

The camp had, all unnoticed by the two, grown very quiet. The Brownes were sleeping soundly; only the Hindoo woman, Kirza, paced to and fro within the tent, coming now and then to the open door and gazing at the cold, starry Himalayan sky. The huge camp fire burned and glowed. The subdued crackling of its ruddy flames, with the distant neighing of the horses, were the only sounds to be heard.

Stephen drew the hesitating, reluctant and saddened girl into his arms. "I cannot let you go out of my life like this," he said. "There must be a way out of it, and I shall come for you, I shall claim you some day.

"Do not persuade yourself mistakenly that you owe a duty to anyone. Each soul must work out its own life scheme. Those who hamper it, or seek to retard the spirit's development along its own lines, must answer for it to the great Creator of us all; leave it to time and to me. Good-night, my love, good-night."

The Hindoo woman now stood in the tent door. Stephen led Irene to her. "Care for her well, Kirza," he said. "I look to you to guard her if it be that I must leave her."

The Hindoo woman gazed searchingly at them both, then with a look of devotion towards Irene, she followed her within the tent.

Stephen walked slowly back to his tent, and found George Rolston sitting in the doorway. George noticed Stephen's face; he had seen the couple from

his distant post. But he made no remark. He was a considerate, faithful friend. Besides, he had his own troubles. Life was not going right with him, either. He was still, however, the thoughtful, kind, unselfish George he always had been, and always would be.

Chapter III.

Lassa, the Forbidden City

The highway leading from the country into Lassa is not, as may be supposed, a macadamized road, but a traveled path over beaten, down-trodden grass and hard earth. Pilgrims making a religious tour to some sacred mountain, or to visit some holy priest; caravans of merchants going to, or returning from, India, Nepal, or Kashmir, on horseback or on foot, wear the road into a hard-beaten path.

At a long, blue lake, two days after the camp-fire rest, the travelers halted, while a quaint ferry boat, with the carved head of a lion upon its prow, drew to the shore and waited for them to embark and cross; the boatmen, meanwhile, gazing curiously and rather suspiciously at them while they did so.

After reaching the other side of the beautiful, placid, turquoise lake, guides appeared leading yak for the baggage. These guides were really what would be called, in other parts of the world, express-men. The lighter baggage had been brought over with the passengers, while the heavier crossed on a lumbering raft, together with the horses, the soldiers and the servants. Several trips were required to bring them all safely over.

At the end a heavy toll was required, which they had no resource except to pay. However, at this moment an interpreter appeared who informed them the toll was not too much, and offered his services at a much higher sum. This was also paid, and they proceeded to the first of the five gates, so called, leading into the great plain on which the city stands.

The interpreter spoke a mixed language, consisting of Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan and French, with no perceptible English about it. But the Chinese and French enabled the party to understand what was required of them, and this was to hand over their passports at once. Colonel Browne offered the documents he had in his possession, but the officers on guard at this first challenge gate subjected them all to a long and rigid examination before he finally allowed them to pass through the rows of Tibetan soldiers lining each side of the gate.

At the second gate this process was repeated; also at the third and fourth gates; the examinations increasing in severity as they proceeded. At the fifth and last gate, they despaired of ever getting through at all, for here they had to wait, while all the papers were returned to the first gate to be re-signed and stamped with the Chinese and Tibetan seals.

At this point a Chinese official appeared, who was returning from India. He took the entire company under his protection and they were readily passed through the twin rocks, the last gate, by the Chinese sentinels, into the outer borders of the long Plain of Milk. This plain is so called from its white appear-

ance. It is a sandy marsh fifteen miles long, drained by the River Tolungchu and crossed by a great bridge.

Through the shallow water can be seen the white and glistening sand, sparkling and shifting ever. From this, the Plain of Milk takes its name. Through this plain fifteen miles in length, runs a causeway leading to the secret, carefully guarded city of Lassa. With the morning sun shining upon it, the city was reflected through a mirage of fleecy clouds tinted with rose, as the traveler saw it in the distance.

During the last part of their journey they had passed Monasteries in which were buried the former bodies of the reincarnated Lamas; also many sacred bronze and stone Buddhas; but nothing compared with the view every moment drawing nearer and growing more sublime. White terrace above white terrace rose the Temple Portola, and between its white walls, the rich crimson of the Red Palace of the Grand Lama appeared.

The Golden Roof of the Palace of the Chief Magician crowned a lofty hill behind them, and glittered in the sunlight. Enormous walls shut out the encroaching river which soaks the entire plain.

After passing the western gate in the wall of the city itself, there appeared to the view a green expanse of woodland, tall trees and beautiful shrubbery. The lowest suburbs of the city, where live the very poor, are a great contrast to the costly villas of the rich, rising all around on the higher grounds, and on the hills outside the city.

It was to one of these palatial villas, the members of

the party were taken, to make their home while they remained in Lassa. This favor was obtained through the kindness of the Chinese official who had piloted them through the last gate into the Plain of Milk. The villa belonged to a friend of his, who was absent at present from Lassa, and who had given him power to rent it. For a reasonable sum the foreigners might remain there during their stay in the city. But he would first have to get a written order from the Chinese Deputy or "Amban" as he was called. The fact that they were foreigners made this necessary.

They had to pass the Temple of Yokang on the way to the Deputy; therefore he permitted the interpreter to show them the temple interior while they awaited his return.

This lovely city with its paradise of cool streams and green leaves, grassy lawns, and noble trees, encircled in the distance by the snowy Himalayas, the highest mountains in the world, is the home of Buddhism, of occultism, of mystery.

Like the Pope in the Vatican at Rome, is the Grand Lama of Tibet. Seclusion enfolds him, and mystery surrounds the temple, where behind the great brown Yak curtain, which is eighty feet high, he sometimes appears, to bless his people.

In this temple of Yokang is found the immense bronze Buddha, like the Buddha of Kamakura, Japan, a wonder of the world. Copper and brass lamps, containing butter, and tiny wicks floating in melted pools, burn with their yellow flame, ever in rows before this placid, smiling God. Brass and silver vases, turquoise

studded, stand on each side of this great statue. Ivories, yellow with age, deck these shrines of the deity. Peacock feathers bending from great brass vases overshadow all.

Around the neck of the great Buddha are hung heavy chains, strand upon strand, of gold and turquoise. They reach nearly to his shoulders, and in front fall almost to his clasped hands.

Around his benign forehead is a broad band of gold, with a turquoise in the center, as large as a hen's egg. The effect is one of great magnificence and beauty.

All this grandeur of decoration does not detract from the awful calmness of the face, from the inscrutable gaze which seems to speak of the knowledge of the mysteries of life, death, and eternity. Those far-seeing eyes fascinate and draw, till one passes out of the Hall of the Yokang, and the great curtain falls behind him.

This Temple is the most important thing in Central Asia. It is the treasure house of the country, and the home of its faith. Within its thick walls are priceless gems. Through the immense pillars surrounding its courtyard, and through the arched alcoves opening on its corridors, could be seen the green lawn from which came a faint echo of the chanting of monks.

The exterior of this great Temple is so very plain that one has no hint of the grandeur within. Its interior, and the exterior of the Portola, the home of the Grand Lama, are the most magnificent sights of the jealously guarded city. Lassa is the sacred center

of Tibet, but the Temple of Yokang is the inner shrine of all, for it is the home of the gigantic Buddha. Silence reigns in the hushed hall. Feet must be shod in sandals that enter here; not even a whisper is allowed to disturb the oppressive quiet.

The little company felt well repaid for the delay, in the sight they had obtained of the interior of this wonderful Temple. But now their new friend, the Chinese official, returned with the desired legal permission for them to occupy the villa; to the latter upon a terraced hill, he conveyed them; then departed. The Chinese Deputy had given them permission to use the villa for a period of four weeks, when he regretted that the return of its owner from Ladak would necessitate their removal.

This was a courteous way really, of informing them that Lassa could not longer tolerate the English strangers within its boundaries. With many thanks they accepted the favor, transient though it was, knowing the suspicion with which all foreigners were regarded, especially when accompanied by soldiers. They determined to see all they could in the short time allotted them.

Wearied with the last stages of the long journey, the members of the party retired to their rooms, which though fitted up in oriental style they found exceedingly comfortable. Tibetan and Persian rugs covered the polished floors. Hanging lamps of wrought black filagree iron afforded illumination for the spacious rooms. Damask and lace curtains, embroidered with gold, hung at the windows. The low couch

beds were covered with beautiful tapestry, and portieres of tapestry representing strange scenes of hunting and warfare, hung at the wide entrances to the apartments. Small bronze Buddhas were in alcove niches, also brass vases, turquoise studded ornaments, rare carvings, and paintings of Tibetan art.

The large sum Colonel Browne had offered as compensation, seemed little enough for all this grandeur. This compensation or testimonial of appreciation, as the Tibetans regarded it, had been received by the Chinese official with true oriental polite reluctance. In fact, when the good Colonel inadvertently mentioned it in plain English terms, as "rent," a look of horror, or extreme deprecation, passed over the face of the punctilious official. However, the Colonel immediately rectified his mistake and the matter was smoothed over.

After several hours of rest the party found that the evening had come; although it was still light enough to see from the wide windows a most beautiful panorama, topped by golden roofs, with terraces descending one by one, to the sparkling river below, flowing over its banks of white sand. Round the whole, curved another wonder of Lassa, the great "Linkow," the six-mile long, beautiful thoroughfare or road, which circled the city. Always are the sad-eyed monks to be seen pacing slowly around its entire length, as if doing penance, with their brass prayer wheels whirling in their hands.

From lines stretched from trees to posts, all along the winding route were seen the prayer flags, and

also bright strips of cloth containing Mantgrams. These last are an ingenious arrangement of words, powerful, in that they are arranged in some mysterious way, regarding sound. When these are pronounced correctly they will either bless a friend or curse an enemy, according to the effect desired.

Surrounding this beautiful scene rose the snowy peaks of the Himalayas, while low in their fertile valleys, the barley fields were slowly ripening.

Just where the town meets the green lawns, is the Yutak Sampa or Turquoise Bridge, so called, on account of the beautiful blue tiles with which it is roofed. This is another of the seven wonders of the city. To the right stands the home of the Chinese Deputy. Formerly no Regent could be appointed without the sanction of the Chinese Emperor.

Just beyond, upon the bluff, could be seen the magnificent residence of the Head Magician, the chief astrologer, whose authority is nearly as great as that of the Grand Lama himself. The Lamas have never been able to take away the influence of the wizards; and "charms" in little turquoise studded boxes are sold to the people. These with incantations and "Mantrams" are relied upon by the childlike people of the outlying country and villages to protect them from evil. The educated class, however, are not quite so superstitious.

The Head Magician was indeed a great and learned man, also a very good man; who used his mysterious powers only for the benefit of those who looked up to him. In fact he was beloved by them, while the

Grand Lama though a high and sacred being, was looked upon with awe, and as one afar off.

Count Kozlov and Lieutenant Rolston went out upon the terrace for a quiet cigar, as the stars came out, and together with the little iron lanterns lighted up the city till the moon should appear later on.

Colonel Browne soon joined them, while the few soldiers they had retained near them, as a guard, went down into the lower city, where were the others who were camped there. Mrs. Browne and Irene remained upon a kind of parapet veranda, enjoying the starlit scene and the refreshing atmosphere.

Stephen Wyndham, according to his custom, started out for a walk, his thoughts upon the subject which was uppermost in his mind; the strange state of affairs which so completely held in bondage the girl whom he loved. Not knowing the difficulty, he could not remove it; and she would not reveal it.

Thinking thus deeply he did not realize how far along the Linkow he had gone, for he had sought this thoroughfare. He finally realized that the crowd of pedestrians was becoming less; for at last only a stray monk, or a weary merchantman, remained. He had reached a castle-like building on a high bluff. Its parapets and outside stairways, its majestic proportions, all indicated that it belonged to some person of rank.

As he stopped to gaze at the little twinkling iron lanterns high up in its windows, he saw a tall figure standing beside a large arched entrance at the front of the castle stairs of stone which led up to another

entrance at the summit of the bluff. At the lower gateway a courtyard opened on one side. On each side of the arched iron gate hung immense brass lanterns and beneath them were sentry boxes, in each of which stood a Tibetan soldier.

As Stephen hesitated and then turned to retrace his steps, the tall figure standing in the arched entrance, advanced slowly, and in a deep sonorous tone spoke to him in the English language, though in oriental style.

"Allow me, brother, to show you a shorter way to your abode, than if you were to retrace your steps."

Stephen, greatly surprised, bowed and thanked him.

As the stranger turned aside from the "Linkow" into a grassy path, he joined him. This path he soon observed, was leading directly to the villa, whose lights shining high on the terrace, he now recognized.

The stranger was unusually tall, and was dressed in the robe of a monk. Nothing was visible of his cowled face but a pair of deeply set and burning eyes; eyes glowing with the wonderful light of mysterious inner wisdom; the look which occult knowledge gives to the advanced Yogi. His voice was a reverberating one, carrying, and of a bell-like quality.

"This is no ordinary man," thought Stephen as he noticed now the stranger's garb. His robe was richly embroidered in gold, and upon his breast shone a great golden star, in heavily embossed design. Stephen recognizing him as some person of authority, began to inquire as to the religion of the country.

"Brother," said the stranger, "our religion is very

old; but it was, at one time, taught by the early Christian fathers. They once believed in many things which after some years they cast away; and in so doing they lost much of the truth. We teach incarnation of the soul in a new body, life after life for many existences, until the spirit finally becomes purified and perfect, and returns to its true home, to rest in a great sea of peace and happiness; one with all, and yet each retaining its own individual consciousness.

"Our Grand Lama, we believe to be the reëmbodiment of some great purified Teacher. When one passes from his body, we believe he is immediately reincarnated in the body of some new born child. We believe that one short life on earth is only a day, in the great spiritual school of the soul; that we return many times till the school-life is finished, till our lessons here are all learned, when we pass on to a higher world. We believe in a life of sacrifice, devoted to good works. We must, however, uphold to the people, the masses, who have not progressed thus far, a certain dignity of position. They look up to us; we guide and direct them."

"And do you also believe in planetary influence upon human life?" asked Stephen.

"I do, indeed," replied the stranger. "Man's destiny is foretold by the configuration of planets at his birth. Their seal is stamped inexorably upon him, when he draws his first breath; for good or for evil it will be, according to the good or evil aspects of the planets that ruled at this time; and according also

whether good or evil planets were rising at the time."

"I would like to consult the great Astrologer here," said Stephen. "I would like to bring a friend, a young woman, with me, that we may learn our destiny from the high authority whom I understand resides in Lassa."

"Present this card, my brother, at the Castle we have just left, on the day after tomorrow, early in the afternoon, and your wish may be granted. See, yonder is your dwelling, the Villa on the Terrace."

"And you, friend," said Stephen, "whom shall I thank for this kindness and this information?"

"Thank no one, brother; our profession in its highest, noblest order, lives but to benefit mankind. *I* am the Head Magician, the Chief Astrologer of Lassa."

With stately bow and measured tread, the great man, the learned scholar, the master of hidden mysterious forces, retraced his way, leaving Stephen astonished at the honor bestowed upon him.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE HEAD MAGICIAN

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Chapter IV.

The House of the Head Magician

Count Kozlov had heard of Lassa's great Master of the Occult, and of his stately palace on the Bluff. Wonderful gems—treasures of fabulous value—as well as talismans—charms, and stones of good and evil qualities, were reputed to be stored in the stronghold of the wizard, whom the Tibetans reverenced almost as much as the Grand Lama himself, and loved more. The childlike people ever looked to him for help in their various troubles.

Notwithstanding his wealth and magnificence of surroundings, he moved among them with the demeanor of a brother. He was always a friend in need, though stern when occasion demanded. In public he dressed in the sombre robes of the priesthood, but they were of great costliness of material. The golden star always shining on his breast denoted his high authority throughout the city.

Kozlov himself had dabbled somewhat in the occult. He hoped to buy *more* knowledge from this master of the hidden arts. He was himself a hypnotist of rare power. Strange events had indeed preceded his departure from his native city in Russia. Crimes had truly been committed which gave evidence of having

been planned by a master mind. For many years there had been hints and whispers among the Count's neighbors, of strange comings and goings, at the Russian castle.

Kozlov also wished to add to his rare collection of antiques and curios.

So on the morning after his arrival in Lassa he started early to visit the city. As the first place of interest to him was the Head Magician's house, he invited no one to accompany him. For his own reasons he wished to go there alone. He did not know what diplomatic arrangements might be required to precede that visit, but determined to make an effort to see the great man without such etiquette, if possible.

On arriving at the palace on the bluff he observed the two sentinels and inquired how he could see the Magician. Without replying, one of them struck the huge door with his spear several times. The loud rapping reverberated as if through lofty spaces. Then almost immediately the door flew open, and a porter appeared who held out his hand for some official document or invitation which should give the intruder the right to seek entrance. Kozlov handed the man his card, who motioned him to be seated on a carved bench, and disappeared up a long and narrow winding stairway of stone. High above was the ceiling, for the stairs appeared to lead to the roof of the building which was itself built on the bluff. After a delay of some fifteen minutes, the sandaled footfalls of the

porter were heard descending. He beckoned to the Count to ascend.

Kozlov followed him, and after winding around the circuitous stairs for at least five minutes they came out into a spacious hall, carpeted with ornamental rugs, and hung with cloth of gold tapestry. At regular intervals were niches or alcoves in the wall, and in these spaces stood beautiful statues of ivory, or bronze, or mother of pearl. So gorgeous was the display that the Count would have lingered on the way had he dared. But the porter led calmly on, to a room at the far end of the long hall.

In the doorway of this room he paused, and making a low obeisance stood aside for the Count to enter. Kozlov looked, then he, too, made an extremely civil salutation for him; for seated on a kind of low platform in a high-backed, carved ebony chair, was the most stately and impressive man he had ever seen. Not even a King could rival him in dignity and bearing. He was not garbed in his priestly robe, but was wrapped in an oriental kimono of dark blue material, studded here and there with silver stars, and a crescent moon. His deep-set eyes burned in a pallid face which spoke of studies by midnight oil, of secret mystic lore, of a knowledge of the science of the stars, of strange powers which other men had not.

The room was lined with shelves, with cases of mahogany and rosewood, and it opened into still another, a larger chamber, where cabinets of inlaid wood, with doors of plate glass revealed beautiful gems, turquoise, opals, rubies, diamonds and other

precious stones. Other cases contained strangely designed figures in gold filagree, and even ivory carved birds and beasts, which had the power of chasing away evil, and bringing only good to their wearer or possessor.

"What do you desire here, stranger?" asked the Magician, though his occult penetration, his developed sixth sense. had read the object of Kozlov's visit before he spoke.

"I have been told, O Magician, of rare and beautiful things contained in this palace, and that some of them are even for sale."

"Yes," replied the Magician, "we sometimes sell articles here, and give the proceeds to the support of the monasteries, or to the poor of the city."

"I wish to look at these treasures before I leave, but first I would like some information, which, I believe, you alone can give me. I wish to investigate the occult."

"For what purpose, friend, do you desire this? I must tell you that in our profession we give no information, we render no assistance which can injure others. We deal in no Black Magic here."

"Nor have I asked it," replied Kozlov, realizing that part of his errand must remain unfulfilled, and not knowing how accurately the Magician was reading his very soul; "I wish to know something of what is going on in my former home city in Russia. I would look into what is being done by my old acquaintances, the residents of that town."

"Your wish shall be gratified," replied the Magi-

cian; "be seated at that table, and fix your gaze intently upon the large crystal ball which you see resting upon it."

Kozlov sat down, and noticing for the first time the crystal ball, he at once became interested. He had heard of "Black Magic," but heretofore had not thought of *"White Magic,"* as being an entirely different thing. He gazed intently; and almost instantly he had forgotten time and place, and the Magician himself, in the strange things which now passed like a panorama before his startled gaze.

He recognized the pale, beautiful face of his departed wife; and her reproachful, accusing look sent a dagger through even his hard heart. He saw a great mansion of hers, burning, with all its treasures.

He saw himself receive a large sum of money as insurance for the loss, for which he had been responsible through a hired incendiary. And even this insurance he had kept, though it belonged to his step-daughter's fortune. He saw himself paying to the poor tool who did the deed at his instigation, a paltry, miserly sum,—a sum of money which the weak creature who had been his own servant, *used* to keep his family from starving.

He saw another dastardly deed done by this same tool. An enemy of Kozlov's was stabbed one dark night, and robbed of a note, which he held against the Count for a large sum of money.

He saw several anarchists plotting against the government, with himself at their head. An old woman, his step-daughter's nurse, he saw dying from poison,

because she knew too much of him and his deeds.

Last of all, a scene passed before him which seemed to pause, to linger threateningly. He saw a large room, a hall of justice, in which were gathered high officials, holding an investigation of all these strange things. The judge wrote them out, every one upon a blackboard, before the gaze of all the assembly; and above the list he wrote the name of Kozlov. The Count began to tremble; he awoke. He became conscious of his surroundings.

The Magician was speaking; he was asking if the stranger desired to see anything more. "One person only, I would like to see and talk with; a man, an old servant, who for many years was in my service," replied the Count.

Instantly a clap of thunder, or an explosion, sounded in Kozlov's ear; he was somewhere else; but where? The room, the Magician, all had disappeared, and he was away in space alone. A far-reaching black cavern, it seemed, lighted only by a dull, lurid, sulphurous glow. Demoniac cries, unearthly wailings, rent the awful void. Alone? No; for now, strange unearthly forms hovered near and seemed to threaten him. All but one, were menacing. This man stood by, and spoke sadly to him.

"Master," said he, "do you know me?" Then Kozlov recognized his former servant. "Michael Nokovitch," said he, "where are we? What are you doing in this strange place?"

"Master, I am in a zone of the other world, that intermediate plane nearest the boundaries of the earth,

which is called purgatory. For the crimes committed at your command, I am suffering. No more can I tell you now, but soon, very soon, you will return, the next time *to remain.* Then you shall know the result, the penalty of those evil deeds."

A dull thunder boomed again; and slowly the phantom scene faded. Count Kozlov awakened upon the earth once more. He was shaking as with a chill. Cold perspiration covered his face, but he rallied his mental forces. Controlling himself, he asked the Magician, if he might now look at the treasures in the cabinets and cases.

The Occultist arose with a slow dignity, and led the way to the inner room. Among so many exquisite things, Kozlov was bewildered. He wandered back and forth gazing first at one and then at another. Unable to decide upon any particular jewel where all were so beautiful, he began to doubt his financial ability to purchase such gems.

He was about to ask the Magician to choose for him, when his eye fell upon an object which so fascinated him that all others at once lost their charm in comparison; it was a *necklace* in the form of a serpent, the head joining the tail, which in this oriental land had a deeply religious signification. The head biting the tail, signifies eternity, that never-beginning, and never-ending circle. The serpent's head was an immense opal, changing in color from rosy hues to pale blue or violet, or according to circumstances, from a dull sullen red, to a deeper blue like that of a stormy sky at sea. Sunk in the flat

head gleamed two small emerald eyes like those of a basilisk, giving the impression of a hidden life, looking out of the strange charm. The body was one long coil of glistening links, each link made of silver scales, rubies and opals, in alternation, being deeply set or sunk in them.

The Magician observing Kozlov's fascinated gaze, took the necklace from its case and held it to the light. Then each gem glowed as if on fire, and each link swayed by its delicate connecting wire of filagree silver, coiling and uncoiling almost like a living serpent.

"Is this necklace for sale?" at last the Count managed to enquire. The Magician paused, as if considering; then, "It may be possible to arrange for its sale," said he; "and if so, the money will be given to the poor. But I must obtain the consent of the owner, who left it with me years ago. However, you must know that it has an evil influence on all who own or wear it. That is, its secret spell for good has never been discovered, in the centuries which have elapsed since it was sent from Egypt, as a gift, to the great and wise King Hamurabai of Babylon.

"To him it brought only benefit; and here and there down its long descent through a line of Kings, it remained inactive, causing neither good nor ill. It at last descended to Nebuchadnezzar; and on his family fell such great disaster that he placed it in the temple, and there it remained for years. Then it was stolen and all trace of it lost, till it reappeared in China in the possession of an Emperor.

"From him it was handed down until it came eventually into the family of a young noble. This young man led a dissolute life for many years. In later life he reformed. Then journeying into Tibet, he joined the Order of the Buried Monks and left the strange amulet with me. We must consult him.

"The necklace once held within the opal clasp, a papyrus or Egyptian parchment, on which was written the strange secret of its working, with the names of all who once owned it. The secret papyrus has been removed, but the Buried Monk knows where it may be found."

"I must have this amulet, and I must try to secure the parchment. I do not fear it. When once it is mine I can have the gems divided and reset, and thus destroy its work for ill," said the Count.

"Consider well before you do so rash a thing," replied the Magician; "it may mean danger to you; but we must see Brother Antonio, the Buried Monk."

"Tell me its price," said Kozlov, "if it rests with you to settle this."

"Its price is left to me," said the Magician; "for as I told you, the money is to be given to the poor. It is merely a form we go through in obtaining the Monk's consent. The sum is five thousand pounds."

Kozlov was surprised that it was not more, considering its antiquity and its value as a curio. It was a large amount, but he would not lose it, though it took still more of his step-daughter's fortune to purchase it. And so it was arranged to visit the Buried Monk that same evening at the hour of six.

After Kozlov left, the Magician seemed lost in deep thought for many moments. Then arousing from his reverie, he exclaimed, "It is written in the stars; so let it be."

Chapter V.

The Buried Monk

At the given hour, Kozlov was at the Castle entrance. Two palanquin or closed chair-conveyances stood waiting.

As the Magician appeared, the sentinels in their boxes made a low obeisance. Entering the palanquin they were hurried by the Tibetan bearers around the Castle walls, behind the bluff, and out over the plain to the lower hills of the Himalayas. They crossed the Turquoise Bridge and struck into a stony path leading to a long low monastery. At its entrance they paused. An oriental gate of wood, with a large bronze gong, was closed and barred to the outside world. Beside it and attached to a long chain, hung an iron mallet.

The Magician lifted this, and struck upon the bronze gong. Before its musical reverberations had ended the porter appeared. Turning a huge key in its lock, and sliding back an iron bolt, he allowed the heavy gate to swing open on its massive bronze hinges.

He had already lighted an iron lantern which hung near the entrance. It was not yet dusk, but soon would be. As they passed the windows of a large

low dining room they saw the monks seated at their evening meal. Upon long tables were plates and bowls in which their frugal fare was being served by coolies. But the object of their quest was not among these priests.

The Magician passed on to the farther end of the monastery where the hills rose like a wall beside it. In the sides of these hilly walls were set sliding wooden windows with a tablet of ivory placed on each one. Upon each tablet was a number, like the number of a convict in his prison cell.

Still they followed the stony path. Here and there iron lanterns hung from poles, shedding a faint light, as it was growing dark. Along the path, on its other side bloomed camellias, japonicas and lilacs, scenting the twilight air. Birds were twittering as they sank into their nests. A marble basin caught the silvery waters of a fountain near by. In Lassa, four miles away a temple bell was pealing. How the inmates of these cave houses must enjoy all this: "It is beautiful," exclaimed the Count.

The Magician smiled. "Not to the inmates of these cells, behind these closed windows," said he; "for them shines neither sun, nor moon, nor star."

"Do they never look out into the bright world, then? Do they never leave their caves?" asked the Count.

"When they receive their daily food; that one brief glimpse is all," replied the Magician.

And now they had stopped. They had reached the last narrow sliding window, the last number in bronze

figures on its tablet. These numbers, with the names belonging to each, were kept in a Registry in a small office at the gate. But the Magician knew the number. He knew the name of the one he wished to see.

He had known him as a gay and dissipated young man, when twenty years ago the streets of Lassa had been familiar with his revels. It was he who had last owned the amulet. The son of a noble family, he had fallen into dissolute ways, had led a wicked life. And then it all had turned to ashes in his prime. Disasters, misfortunes followed fast. Too late he saw his wasted youth vanish. He repented of his folly. He retired from it all. He took upon himself the most extreme of ascetic vows. He left the uncaring world. He shut out the light of day, the flowers, the birds, the sights, and sounds of earth.

Through his remaining years he would do penance for those wasted ones which he could not bring back. He became a "Buried Monk"; a member of that order who live behind these closed windows in their hillside caves. Whose darkness is lighted only by a faint ray, a tiny wick floating in a brass saucer of burning butter. These caves were tunneled into the hills and were quite roomy, but it was all one vast darkness. No morn, no noon, nothing but a silent tomb.

Twice a day upon a shelf outside the sliding windows, an attendant placed a loaf of bread and an urn of water. Then the servant would tap loudly upon the board window; slowly it would slide open, and

a pallid hand reach out and take the bread and water within. After this, the board slid back, and that was all, until the same hour of another day.

Truly are they called the "Buried Monks." How many were here, were known by the Registry, perhaps fifty in all, at this place.

Some half dozen times the Magician had knocked at this window in the last twenty years. For the sake of the youth he had once known, he sometimes came and rapped and called the long-forgotten name. He called it now, musically and slow, then waited. A long silence, in which the slow brain within, reasoned that something unusual was transpiring outside his closed window. Had he mistaken the hour in his solitary dreaming?

Slowly the board slid back. A trembling hand reached out and felt along the narrow shelf. No, the bread and water were not there. He had not mistaken the time of day. The Magician called the old name again. It was not quite forgotten. The long dark years lifted. The once familiar sound filtered through his brain. A pale, death-like mask of a face appeared at the window, and cavernous, sunken eyes looked forth, into the deep and searching ones of the Magician.

Kozlov had retired to a little distance as he had been directed. There he could see, but could hear nothing. "Brother Antonio," said the Magician, "many years ago you left with me an amulet, the jeweled necklace."

He waited while the words should sink into the

comprehension, now waking to the past. The waves of memory stirred, old recollections were returning, his face grew less apathetic, the mask lifted. He seemed more like a living man. He remembered now, but made no other sign.

The Magician stepped closer; he stood beneath the aperture, his face near the Monk's. He dropped his voice, and in the Tibetan language spoke. "The Amulet has been sold. Its curse goes with it; for the purchaser is a sinful man; greater wickedness is in his heart than appears upon the surface. For him shall Karma work, and quickly; he justly goes to meet his doom; but he hath an innocent young daughter. To her the serpent talisman will fall. The day is near. *She* must not suffer for *his* sins. Where is the papyrus, the Egyptian parchment, which holds the secret of the working of the Amulet?"

The Monk's pallid face had lighted with returning intelligence as he followed the slowly spoken words. He grasped the situation, he was dealing with the problem. The lethargy of years had been disturbed; *he* had no longer any business with the world. But his blighted youth, his own evil works might be partly atoned for through his doing a good deed.

His order did not permit its members to speak, but he signalled that he would write. The Magician produced pencil and paper, and on it the Monk traced a few words and laid them on the shelf. Then the Magician placed the Amulet upon the paper. Reaching out his shaking hand the Monk touched the gems. Their flashing fires paled at once. They grew

dull, misty, dead. Life seemed leaving them, as it was leaving the Buried Monk. For he was done with all.

He did not close the window, but leaned upon it, as the Magician said farewell. As Kozlov joined the latter, returning down the stony path, under the lanterns of the monastery, he felt the sunken eyes of the Buried Monk following him. Suddenly a shrill, unearthly voice pierced the twilight, and he stopped, as if he had received a shock. "Turn, turn," it wailed; "cease from evil, learn to do well, turn from the error of thy way."

The Count looked back, so did the Magician. Several Monks were approaching, and they had heard the voice. All hurried back to the last numbered sliding window. Brother Antonio had broken the vows of his Order. The Buried Monk had spoken. Some higher power had forced the warning from his lips. And with the words his spirit had passed out of earthly bonds.

He had fallen across the narrow window. As the priests lifted his lifeless form, the Magician in low tones gave them brief directions, promising to return tomorrow.

Then he passed from the monastery to the palanquin which waited for him and for Kozlov. At the Castle gate he handed the Count the paper, upon which was written this information given by Brother Antonio:

"The Egyptian papyrus is in the Monastery of Leh. Ask for the Wise Man of Leh. He has the

secret of the Amulet. The money paid for it, must be given to the poor." The Magician ordered the bearer of the Count's palanquin to take him to the Villa upon the terrace; then handed Kozlov the case containing the necklace, and wishing him good evening, entered his palace door.

As Kozlov was borne along to the Villa, he opened the case and took out the necklace. An electric shock passed over him, like that he had received when the Buried Monk had uttered his last words, which were intended as a final warning to one who was nearing his doom. The gems changed color, the rubies turned to a lurid, angry, blood-red; the filagree silver scales glistened and seemed to writhe. The opal head had become an inky blue, and the emerald eyes glistened malevolently.

The Count involuntarily shuddered and replaced the serpent necklace in its case. It was probably superstition, but they would secure the papyrus. He would go to the Monastery of Leh, the Capital of Ladak, and there learn the secret of the working of this strange talisman.

In the meantime he had secured a rare curio, a valuable antique. In an emergency he could sell the stones; but for the present, Irene should wear it, that all might see and envy him the possession of such a treasure.

The evening had just begun for the little party at the Villa, when he returned. Irene had not gone down to the large reception hall. So he gave her the written directions regarding the papyrus, and told

her to lay them carefully away. He told her also, to put the necklace on, and wear it this very evening. As for himself, he was tired from his exciting day, and would rest awhile. He told her to bring the necklace to him, when the evening was over; as he felt safer about it when it was in his own possession. It was too valuable to lose.

Irene clasped the Amulet around her neck. The beautiful stones seemed to lose almost nothing of their brilliancy. They shone with a misty splendor, a slight dimness only, resting upon them. Yet a strange feeling took possession of the girl as the gems rested upon her neck. Some slumbering chord of memory stirred very faintly. It almost seemed to her that she had worn the necklace before. Not knowing why she did so, for the night was warm, she went to her trunk and took from it a dark heavy velvet cape, with a ruby colored satin lining. She threw this around her and went below where the Brownes and the officers were gathered.

Stephen Wyndham was not there, but the others exclaimed, and admired, examined and wondered, regarding the Amulet necklace, to a degree that could not fail to satisfy the Count's vanity, when he heard of it. Then Irene left them all and went out upon the wide veranda, looking down the terraces to the river below.

Stephen was approaching. He was coming toward her down the long paved balustraded veranda. The dark velvet cape with its ruby lining fell back, and the strange necklace gleamed in the light of the

iron lanterns hanging from above. She waited for him to speak. Indeed she had entirely forgotten her appearance, but she resembled an oriental princess.

Chapter VI.

The Amulet

"Oh strangely then, will the heart be shaken,
For something starry will touch the hour;
And the mystic winds of the world will waken,
Stirring the soul's tall flower.

For 'twill all come back—the wasted splendor,
The heart's lost youth, like a breaking flower;
The dauntless dare, and the wistful, tender
Touch of the golden hour."

—Edwin Markham.

Irene had been standing near one of the pillars of the balustrade. Now she moved out into the full light. Stephen saw her, and his conduct became surprising. He stopped and turned pale. He looked at her with an intense gaze, as though beholding some one known in long past years who had suddenly and unexpectedly come into his life again from beyond the grave. And yet he could not connect this strange recognition with the personality of today. His eyes rested upon the necklace, and then upon the long velvet cape with its wine satin lining; then returned to her face, and fell again to the Amulet. The spirit sheathed in its veil of flesh was struggling to link the present with the past.

"What is it?" asked Irene trembling at his white shaken appearance. He did not answer. She said again, "Oh, tell me why you look at me so strangely?" Then Stephen spoke, but almost inaudibly; in scarcely more than a whisper, he exclaimed, "My God, that necklace!" As the velvet cape fell back, with its ruby lining all around her, and as the brilliant gems flashed upon her neck, he exclaimed again, "Where, *where* have I seen you before, with that robe around you, and that strange necklace on your neck?"

"Never before, dressed like this," said Irene. "I have never worn these in your presence before."

"But you surely have," he said in a low, intense voice. "*Somewhere* I have seen you standing so, with that long cape around you, and that jewelled thing upon your neck. *Who are* you, Irene? or who *were* you, when I saw you like this before?" Stephen stopped and for some moments seemed to be thinking. At last he said, "I must find the interpretation of this. There must be a foundation for this haunting memory, this dim recognition. If there is any mysterious lore in this occult city which can explain it, we will search it out; Irene, we will visit the Head Magician, the Chief Astrologer, tomorrow."

When Irene had returned the Amulet to her father, she went to her room and vainly endeavored to sleep. But she could not account for the strange sympathy which Stephen's actions and words had aroused in her own soul. Since first she met him, she too had felt a sense of old and familiar companionship come over her whenever they were together.

STEPHEN AND IRENE ON THE VERANDA IN THE MOONLIGHT

"Irene, where have I seen you before, wearing that necklace and with that cloak around you?"

It was past midnight, she had heard the Tibetan watchman passing around the Villa, clicking loudly his ivory rattles, to let the residents know he was performing his duty, even though he might drive into hiding some nocturnal prowler. Some prowler, who, when this noisy protector had disappeared for another hour, would begin his depredations.

Irene was just dropping into a light sleep, when the sharp report of a revolver aroused her. She listened, thinking she might have dreamed it. Then it came again. It came from the end of the hall, in the direction of her father's room. Immediately doors were flung open, and feet hurried past. Then Mrs. Browne rapped at her door, and called. Hastily throwing on a kimono she opened it, to find the Colonel's wife in great alarm, with Kirza, both gazing down the hall. Colonel Browne, Lieutenant Rolston, and Stephen Wyndham, all rushed to the Count's room at the end of the hall, the women following, dreading they knew not what. They found Kozlov sitting up in bed, with a revolver in his hand, and blood streaming from the side of his face.

To their questions he replied, that he was awakened a few moments ago, by a hand reaching under his pillow. Springing up, a knife slashed his face, and he drew his revolver from under the other pillow and fired.

The hastily lighted lamps failed to show any trace of a robber. But the lantern at the end of the hall revealed an open window, and blood was seen on the window frame. A search of the terrace below proved

unavailing, although traces of blood all along the walk beneath the window to the river's edge, manifested plainly the direction the robber had taken. But the great disaster to the Count, was the loss of the Amulet; for it had disappeared.

They bound up his injured face and gave him stimulants; while Lieutenant Rolston and Colonel Browne departed to search the river banks and to give information to the authorities.

In the morning a message came through the Tibetan post man, that a man had been shot in the night; had dragged himself to his home near the Turquoise Bridge, and had died; still clutching in his hand a most wonderful necklace of precious stones; but that it had since disappeared, the widow of the robber denying that it was in her home. In this dilemma Count Kozlov desired Rolston to go to the Head Magician and ask for his help.

On reaching the palace be found that Stephen and Colonel Browne had preceded him and were also waiting at the gate. The Magician heard the story and, requesting them to follow him, went to the house of the dead man. Here they found that he had been removed, and was already buried; and that his widow was seated in her cottage bemoaning her loss. The fact that she had his two brothers left as husbands, did not in the least console her.

A Tibetan woman marries the oldest brother in a family, and in so doing acquires all his younger brothers also, as husbands. This is the strange custom of the country. Moreover she is *the* head of the

family. The husband can transact no business without consulting her. Neither can he spend money without her knowledge, as she carries the purse.

The widow of the robber, or one-third widow, as she might now be considered, continued lamenting the departed, although she had really considered him when alive, as the poorest of the lot. She seemed unconscious of his crime, and unaware that the precious necklace was anywhere about her premises.

But the Magician calmly seated himself; and the others watched from the door. Fixing his gaze on a small rude cupboard in the corner of the room, he remained motionless for a few moments. At last in a low tone he began a slow incantation. He repeated this several times, and then stretched his right arm slowly toward the cupboard. The latter was at least six feet from his extended arm. Nevertheless the cupboard door began to rattle. The widow looked alarmed. The door finally flew open and a small box dropped from a shelf inside, to the floor. Its cover fell off. From the box the serpent necklace began to emerge. It quivered, it was moving, and in a slow undulating manner it glided across the intervening space between the corner and the Magician. Cold chills ran down Colonel Browne's spine, while Stephen Wyndham and George Rolston gazed as if petrified.

The rubies glowed a lurid red, the opal head became an inky blue; the silver scales glistened; the emerald eyes glittered.

It seemed to progress as if drawn by an invisible

hand, until it came within reach of the Magician, when he stooped and lifted it from the floor and placed it within his robe. Then he turned to the frightened woman who was already asking his forgiveness. In the Tibetan language he warned her against repeating the offense; and then withdrew from the cottage and joined the three men, who were now waiting outside. They expressed their astonishment at what they had seen and eagerly begged an explanation of the strange occurrence.

"Some might tell you that such things are done by optical illusion," said he; "but it was not that. The majority of mankind has not reached the development necessary for understanding such a feat. These things are all done by natural laws, but the world has not arrived at the understanding of them yet. Men of science have discovered many things just as wonderful as this, but the sixth sense by which I control the forces of nature beyond the ordinary man, and beyond the scientist, must remain unknown by those who have not progressed so far. The development of this sixth sense, enabled me to know where the Amulet was concealed, as well as to draw it to me. All our senses have been developed slowly; and this further sense, my brothers, must be attained by study, by concentration, by sacrifice, and by living on a higher plane while yet in the body."

The Magician then left them and returned to his palace.

"How such a man can go about, as the servant of

the people, with no pretense or parade, I cannot understand," said Colonel Browne.

"His treasure palace is his one exhibition of grandeur, and that must be to keep the people in awe of him," said Lieutenant Rolston.

When they restored the Amulet to the Count, he resolved that it should not again leave his possession, while he was in this country. Therefore he placed it in a chamois bag and fastened it around his neck.

The next day was the time set by the Magician to receive Stephen and Irene at his house. So early in the afternoon they set forth, accompanied by Mrs. Browne and Kirza, the Hindoo woman, as chaperons. At the entrance to the palace, the latter were shown into the beautiful gardens, given comfortable seats, and refreshments of wine and fruit.

The young people went up the winding stairway. When they reached the end they were taken into a different room from the one the Count had seen. This room contained a raised platform connected with which was some machinery. On the platform were two cushioned chairs with head rests. In the farther corner of the room a large zodiac was painted on the pale blue walls, its planetary houses divided by gilt lines. Through an arched opening the roof of the great palace was seen surrounded by a parapet. In one corner there stood an immense telescope for examining the heavens.

Much of interest attracted their attention, but the Magician requested them to be seated on the platform. Then asking the date of birth of each, he drew

two planetary zodiacs upon the pale blue walls, and filled in the twelve houses, with their signs and degrees, upon each division or house. After making further calculations, he jotted down the planets in their correct position at the time of the birth of each party; and the horoscopes were completed and ready for his reading.

A slow turning globe, in the center of the room, ceased its revolutions. The velvet curtain, at the entrance from the hall, fell noiselessly, shutting out intruders; and the Magician began to explain the chart of birth of each of the young people, giving them as a prelude a short explanation of the science of astrology. They did not question him until later, for he made the subject as plain as it could be made to the mind which has not delved in this useful and interesting study. For not to all is it given to understand this science.

Chapter VII.

The Teaching of the Head Magician

Stephen Wyndham was inclined to a belief, or at least to an interest in the occult. He had read many books on the subject. Irene too felt interested, though to a lesser degree, in mystic lore. She had listened to conversations between her father and several of the genuine Yogi teachers of India, and gradually imbibed ideas and knowledge which, at length, convinced her as it must all who really look into it deeply, that there are profound causes back of all effects; and that there are latent senses in man awaiting development, as surely as those already developed have reached their present stage in the passing of ages.

We have now five senses, but had not all of these in the dim beginning of the race. *Some* of us are already acquiring the use of the sixth sense; others are on the way; and there are yet other faculties awaiting our progress from man to superman, as surely as our present intellectual status has been preceded by the mineral and the vegetable.

The Magician now began a short lecture to his hearers, endeavoring to give them an insight into

that subject in which many are interested, but few are able to understand; the subject of astrology.

"My young friends," he said, looking very kindly upon them, "you must first know that *astronomy* deals with the *movements* of the heavenly bodies; their magnitude, their composition, their relative distances from each other; while astrology relates to the *effect* of the stars or the known planets, upon the destiny of man; for they do affect man's life, his physical, mental, financial and social conditions.

What explains the different phenomena appearing around us every day, unless on this hypothesis? For long ages have these phenomena been noted and handed down by those who have made it a life study. And the result of certain planetary aspects, governing at birth, has been found invariably the same during those ages. For instance, a person born at midnight will be different in appearance and in destiny from a person born one or two hours later, or at any other hour of the day. These planetary aspects at the hour he is born, mark and govern his career.

Also in the case of twins, or any others born at the same time and in the same latitude, it has been proved that their destiny will run in the same channel. Every event of their lives, even to their marriage and death, will be identical in time and circumstance. This is one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the science; for unless there be planetary influences, why should persons born at the same time and place exhibit similar characteristics? This never happens unless the time and latitude are identical.

The observations of centuries have confirmed this. Also by analogy of reasoning, we find the sun and moon ruling the tides, in fact all calculations relating to high and low tides are based upon the position of the luminaries. It is a proven fact also, that in the vegetable world certain plants grow more abundantly when planted during the moon's increase than during her decrease. In the animal world, a person sleeping in the full rays of the moon, is apt to lose his vision somewhat at night; also lunatics are much affected at the change of the moon, hence the name.

If the sun and moon produce effects like these, why should not other planets affect mankind likewise? By means of the air we breathe, the different subtle essences, which are known by occultists, to be thrown off by the various planets, *do* work on the spiritual, mental and physical nature of man. With the first respiration of the new born child, all the forces present in the air, at that moment, find a lodging place in him; whether good or bad, there they are nurtured and grow. There is also a spiritual explanation to this science.

The nebular theory explains how a solar system may be formed from a central fire-mist set in motion. But where the scientist stops, the truly religious philosopher goes ahead. There must be a first cause, whatever man may call it; the superior intelligence which set in motion, and ordered the path, of all the shining, whirling worlds in the firmament.

Occult teaching agrees with the nebular theory, which says that rings were thrown off from the cen-

tral mass of the sun, forming in succession the different planets. The central fire-mist we may consider the first visible manifestation of the Great Power, containing within his being a multitude of thoughts which manifest as beings at varying stages of development. Their various needs require different external environment.

In order to supply such conditions several planets have been thrown off from the central mass, each being differently constituted. Each has different climatic conditions from the other; each is revolving at a different rate of speed, each vibrating at a degree suited to the race upon it. Each planet is the embodiment and home, of a great and exalted spiritual intelligence. This intelligence is the minister of the Absolute, the supreme above all, in that department of his kingdom, endeavoring to carry out his will. And this will has in view our eventual highest good, regardless of temporary ill. These planetary spirits exercise an influence upon all the beings who evolve upon the planet which is their embodiment; also upon the evolving beings of all other planets, according to the development attained by them.

The lower in the scale of evolution a person is placed, the more powerful are the effects of the planetary influence. The higher and more individualized a person is, the more he is able to shape his own course, and the less will he be influenced by the stellar vibrations.

This is why astrology applied to daily life help us. It gives us a knowledge of our weak points; of the

tendency to certain evils in our nature. It shows us our strong points and also, the times most opportune for pushing events towards a successful culmination. At the beginning of our present evolution, all that now is outside our sun, was *inside;* but not all its beings could vibrate at the immense rate existing there. Therefore some fell behind, and in time became a clog on the others. They began to condense at the poles, where motion is slow; but gradually their increased weight brought them to the equator, where motion is most rapid, and they were thrown off from the sun by centrifugal force.

Later other beings failed to keep up the vibratory movements, and they too were thrown off at the proper distance, that the solar vibrations might give them the rapidity necessary to their development. The most advanced spirits stayed with the sun the longest.

Jupiter was thrown off and given its enormous bulk of fiery substance because its inhabitants had arrived at a very high stage of development, where they needed both high vibration and independent motion.

Jupiter is in some respects an exception to the rule, a case where a higher law rules over a lower.

The planets in our solar system are the visible embodiment of the seven spirits before the Throne of God, the Sun. Just as we may, by wireless, transmit the force which moves the key, so may these great spirits exercise an influence upon other beings in proportion to the self-centeredness of the one against whom the stellar influence is directed. If we strive

to know the principles of life, and to act in harmony with the laws of the Absolute, we rise above all other laws, and become a law unto ourselves; co-workers with God; and helpers of the race. My young friends, I read in your hearts a sincere desire to know the truth, that you may do the will of the Great Being."

Stephen now replied to the Magician, "We are deeply interested in your learned discourse. We would gladly hear more, had you the time to give us."

"The hours of this afternoon are yours," replied the great man; "I have no other appointment to-day."

Chapter VIII.

The Magician's Teaching Continued

The Magician went on, "An alphabet of Celestial knowledge is coeval with the history of man, and its origin is lost in prehistoric ages. It is the study of this science of the stars which gave to Chaldea its grandeur, to Egypt its wisdom. It is vast and requires a great mind, an advanced *intellect*, to fully realize it. The greatest minds of all times have grappled with this science and have mastered it, being fully repaid for the time and effort, even though the unbeliever, the foolish scoffer sneered.

From the limits of the first known observation of Claudius Ptolemy down to the German Philosophers of the 17th century who studied and *believed* it, yes, down to the present day, it is an explanation of the apparent injustice and contradictions of different lives.

The planetary influences are the means by which the *several* creative principles manifest themselves. They influence the cosmic life forces by their sympathies and repulsions, which in the realm of spirit are controlled by celestial rulers. The varied physical orbs act as so many magnetic centers. The sum total of their powers is contained within the solar ray. The office of the planets is to receive and absorb some

principle of solar light and reflect such energy upon other bodies under a different polarity. This energy so transmitted, is the planetary influence whose laws and results constitute the science or the language of the stars.

The use of astrology as applied to the lives of mankind can not be taught in a few brief words. Not only does the solar orb count in the life of each mortal, but so count all other planets in proportion to their individual strength. The ancients allotted to the Zodiac twelve houses, to each of which they gave meanings, and to the planets located therein at the time of birth, they ascribed the influence, according to their different natures, upon human life.

Some planets were of a fiery nature like the Sun and Mars, others were cold like Saturn and rather baleful, unless in fortunate aspect. Others like Uranus produced sudden and strange happenings, good or bad, according to aspect. In fact, health, happiness, wealth, business, depend largely upon them. The Solar fluid is an ethereal atmosphere or sea of fluidic element pervading our Solar system, and the sun is the center for the interchange of forces.

Now this ethereal atmosphere, or sea, forms a medium for the transmission of motions and of influences from planet to planet. It also holds in solution the original elements of all kinds of life, which will ever be evolved within the limits of our own solar system. These life and thought forces attract the different planets in proportion to the quality or to the function

of the planet, and the adaptability of the forces to find expression therein.

Each planet acts as a battery of its own special nature, and transmits the elements which form life and thought. These elements are varied in degree and kind by their ever-changing positions from "house to house" of the Zodiac.

So we must consider the nature of the planet, and also the place, or house, of the Zodiac, in which it happens to be at birth. We must consider, too, the position of other planets in aspect to it.

These influences are impressed upon all the beings in all the worlds of our system through this conductivity of the solar ether or fluid. So with a knowledge of the quality or function of the respective planets, we are enabled to determine to what part of a child's nature these qualities will be transmitted, by ascertaining through which sign of the Zodiac the planet was passing at the time of the child's birth. The earth is continually receiving vibrations from outer space.

These vibrations manifest themselves in different ways, as light, heat and chemical rays. They are essential to life and vary in their effects according to the angular relation of the vibrations of one planet to another. An angle of 120 degrees is always good and an angle of 90 degrees is always evil. The effect of these angles determines human destiny; and the various results produced on life and character are in harmony with the planetary conditions at the time of birth.

It is not unreasonable to broad and studious minds to believe that the planets send out their influences, and that they act on human life. But there are many who reject all, that in their present stage of development they are unable to grasp.

Harmony of character is the result of good planetary aspects and inharmony of character is the result of evil aspects. Every individual born is a living proof of this, and science is gradually coming to understand the nature of the forces which underlie the subject. In time the world will accept these truths.

The Zodiac being divided into twelve signs, and each sign having its own distinct characteristics, the position of the ruler and the rising sign, with the sign the sun is in at birth, will give a clear astrological picture of a person born at any given time. Man responds to certain vibrations which we are want to call influences, but in reality it is a magnetic current that is in harmony with the vibration set in motion at the moment of his birth.

Now we who profess to be unravelers of nature's secrets must perform our duty. Our capacity to understand the science of the stars, at once stamps us as the fore-runners of the sixth race. We have been chosen to alter the materialistic current of thought. We must not shrink from our task, we must not fear the tide of public opinion. We must not hesitate to open the eyes of the blind.

Astrology has an array of talent behind it, which no other science can boast. Claudius Ptolemy, Jose-

phus, Zoroaster, Thales, Anaximander, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato. It is quoted by St. Paul, Hippocrates, Aristotle, Pliny, Galen, Virgil, Horace and Nigidius Figulus, the most learned men of Rome, and by Daniel of the Bible.

From the days of the conquest down to the time of Lord Bacon, almost every man of note as a mathematician, was an astrologer. "There is a time when prosperity and riches shall offer themselves and be attained, whether a man sleep or wake. Yet at other times though he pursue them with wings, so unlucky a period occurs as to render all his efforts fruitless.

Some men come into the world in a lucky hour, so that let them be wise or foolish, they are buoyed up on the wings of fate, in all matters or wealth or honor, and succeed in all they undertake. While wiser and better men, smitten with an unlucky time of birth shall be as undeservedly disparaged, and all their undertakings prove unsuccessful and unhappy. Some are lucky in the beginning of their lives and some in the end. As we have said, the child from the moment it draws breath becomes impressed with the stars of Heaven which operate as they stand, and point out the causes, whence the fate and fortune of the new-born infant shall proceed. Early or late, before or at its full time, it matters not, for as the aspect of the significator stands upon the horizon at birth, such shall surely be the fate or fortune of the person.

Strange it seems that nature should bring forth men and women at different places and a distance of years,

all destined to die at one time, but the same manner of death, by war, or pestilence, or shipwreck."

Here comes in our belief in *Karma,* which means each person's merit or demerit, for we believe the time of man's birth is designated by the stars; and that the higher powers have so arranged our affairs that each man is born under the influences which will shape his life as his Karma has merited.

And now, my young friends, remember that on this plastic, ethereal, fluidic substance is impressed all the events which have occurred since the evolution of our planetary system began.

So, to him who has evolved to the necessary spiritual degree, is given the power to look back upon the many incarnations preceding the present; to see himself in previous lives, to trace the course of events, to note the progress of the soul. He reads upon the ethereal scroll of the sky (that impressionable fluidic substance) what are called the 'Akashic Records'; which mean the history of the world, which has been stamped upon this ethereal substance in *lasting* characters."

Chapter IX.

A Vision of the Past

The Magician continued, "As I have already said, on the astral plane is preserved a record of the lives of the souls who have inhabited this planet. These are called Akashic Records. As I have said, you, my children, have not yet reached the stage where your entire past may be unrolled for you. This recollection is with-held from the spirit until it has progressed where it is strong enough to bear it.

The soul could not behold all its past without shrinking from the sight, till it has arrived at the complete understanding of the means necessary for its education. Neither could it be permitted to read the lives of other souls inextricably involved with it, in those lives, until it has reached the stage where it can rise above petty wrongs and the desire for revenge; where it can know of the sins and failures and terrible mistakes of others, and yet not wish to injure them by revealing this knowledge. For these reasons we are not permitted the knowledge of our past till we have reached that advanced condition. Yet to you now, may be given the knowledge of some small part of your past lives."

Stephen and Irene had sat as if entranced while the

Magician had been giving them all this information. He now arose and waved his hands slowly to and fro before their faces and their eyes closed. Then touching a secret lever, or spring, the platform upon which they were seated began slowly to revolve. He pushed a golden button on the wall and the blue silken curtains unrolled and enclosed the platform. He touched an ivory spring upon a quaint bronze box standing beside it, and a weird dreamy music filled all the room. At the same time an odor of oriental perfume began to permeate the atmosphere. It came from the contents of small bronze urns which he had lighted. The Magician himself retired to a far corner of the room, and upon a silken cushion he kneeled before a bronze Buddha and became lost in reverie.

His hands were clasped, he had left the outer world and was communing with his soul.

And the two upon the platform? As their eyes closed, their souls seemed to leave their bodies, as in a clairvoyant state. Their spirits rose, undulating through a fine ethereal substance, which is to the astral realm what water is to the physical. They appeared to float; rising and falling, soaring as does a bird, they passed through the arched windows of the room, and there paused a moment, looking back at their material bodies upon the platform. These now appeared as heavy lumps of clay, or clogging weights which had fallen from them, and left the spirit, the real man, free and inexpressibly light, airy and ethereal. Now they began their backward journey through space and time, down the centuries.

A Vision of the Past

In passing from the cradle to the grave, many times we outgrow and cast away our old garments, putting on new, as the former becomes useless. So does the soul withdraw from one body when its purpose is served, when the spirit has outgrown its home.

Thus as Stephen and Irene saw the past unrolled, more than 2000 years flitting by them like a panorama or a picture on a screen, they found to their surprise that they had lived several lives in all that time. Their last existence had been that of priest and nun, in a great monastery and convent. In the life preceding *that,* one had been a poor peasant woman living in poverty; the other a serf or slave to a hard, tyrannical monarch.

So had proceeded the necessary education of their souls, till all vanity, all selfishness, all pride and harshness to others had been completely eradicated from their character. But in these lives, of which they had been given not the slightest recollection, they had been parted from each other. As the centuries passed before their view, finally came the dawn of that old Babylonian era when the great city was at its highest glory, before it sank, to rise no more from its ruins.

The spell of this long past time was now upon them. The stars were shining on the Euphrates, and its many canals. The reeds beside the latter rose tall and dark. The smell of damp marshes was all around. Beyond them in the distance lights were twinkling in the wonderful hanging gardens. Merry feet were dancing to the sound of oriental music. They, how-

ever, stood beside a cottage in the suburbs of the city, near a wise and revered seer, a prophet, an astrologer of that day and time. His face was familiar, they remembered their errand to him and his answer to their quest. They heard his prophecy of a later life when a few brief years of happiness should be theirs. They heard his admonition to remember that the days of earthly joy were few; that the many brief lives spent on earth were intended only for the education, the growth of the soul.

Next they stood beside the deep canal. They saw and remembered well the tragedy of that fateful night. And now, no further for them did the screen unroll. Perhaps as the Magician had said, they could not yet bear to see more. The early beginning of their souls' career might have been overwhelming in its revelations.

The soul has no race, no country, no creed, no sex, and no family ties; but there are spiritual ties; there are spiritual affinities, and these will bring together through many incarnations those whose affection is of this higher type, in many different lives; and also in the spirit's rest between. Such was the tie existing between these two. The mystery now was revealed to them. They understood; and returned from the past, bringing with them the explanation of the subconscious recollection and the affinity of their spirits. They had been developed and educated to the point where self was nearly dead; where hereafter their first thought would be the good of others.

The Magician aroused from his communing with

his inner self before the inscrutable Buddha. The weird music was dying away. The scent of overpowering oriental perfume was growing fainter. The platform had ceased its revolutions. The Magician touched again the lever, and it reversed its action. The dais began to move in the opposite direction, and as it did so the souls of the two upon it, slowly returned. They floated through the open window, they paused beside those heavy weights of clay, those clogs upon the spirit, with a sigh. As those who take up a grievous weary burden, they resumed once more the robe of flesh, and with it for a few more years the joys and sorrows, the tasks and ministrations of earth.

As their eyes opened again upon the room, the silken curtains rolled up and the Magician stood before them. The memory of their experience was with them, but it was to them like a dream. "My young friends," said he, "you have learned something of your previous lives, enough to make plain the future which now awaits you. But take with you this remembrance: In the fleeting years of earthly happiness which are soon to be your lot, never forget that the great object of life is the continual growth, the progress of the soul.

"To this end give your best and greatest efforts. And to attain this good, you must live for others; *kill out self* and live for the benefit of the race. The soul needs not wealth, it needs not honor; it should have but the ambition to grow towards its final perfection and help its brother man to do the same.

And now a word of admonition. Before you each lies a short period of danger, of doubt approaching to despair. But do not be overwhelmed by the clouds which will soon arise, for they will pass, and the end will be as I have said. Farewell, my young friends. Peace to you, and to all mankind."

The consultation, or strange experience, or wonderful adventure into the mysterious realms of the occult, was over, and these two departed, never to be quite the same as before. For they who penetrate these mysteries with the sincere desire to learn, with no selfish motive as their aim, will henceforth be more serious, more thoughtful for others, caring less for what the physical world can offer them. A definite purpose in life, an unselfish desire to work for the good of mankind, will follow an investigation into the real meaning and object of existence.

Yet, so accustomed are we to dealing with material things upon a material plane, that the young couple could hardly grasp these strange revelations. But one thing they realized; one truth had sunk into their very souls. A few short years and all these foolish toys of earth will be gently taken from us, to be laid away, while we seek the rest we need in the night that comes between our school days in this world. We shall return in the morning of other days, to take up our lessons once more. But then we shall require older, greater, more advanced toys, for we shall have progressed; we shall have grown, life after life, as the child grows, year after year.

When Stephen and Irene left the Magician he

showed them the outside stone stairway which led to the courtyard. This stairway they descended and found the time had really been shorter than it had seemed to them.

Mrs. Browne and Kirza had found it short also, among the rose plants, the beautiful flowers and quaint statuary of the delightful oriental garden. The two young people did not mention their journey into the realm of soul. Such things are best kept to one's self, or at least revealed only to the few who have had like experiences or who by reason of their spiritual advancement beyond the material, are fitted to understand.

Many are they who must lag far behind, those greater souls, who stride onward to distant heights; their spiritual guidance within, leading them ever upward by a better, though narrower and harder way.

Chapter X.

Stealing a Buddha

After the long cold winter of six months, the Tibetan summer almost immediately begins. In the suburbs of Lassa are many woods, shady groves and velvety lawns. Some of these are enclosed, belonging to the villas of the rich; others are public property in the shape of parks. In these places the people held what they call "Lingkas"—a kind of garden party.

On a day when the lawns were mossy, the peach trees blooming and the willows bending their green branches over the little streams, our party were invited to attend a wedding ceremony at a public park. One of the city officials had come to the Villa on the Terrace to accompany them to the place. When they reached the park the festivities were beginning.

Rugs of great value were spread upon the grass, for it was a fete of the wealthy, a marriage of a young couple of rank. The guests were seated, Tibetan or Japanese fashion, upon these mats. On a rug of matting at one side was spread the refreshment, and various liquors for drinking. The musical part of the fete was already in progress, consisting of singing, dancing and instrumental performances. The children were playing about and the young men

were wrestling and throwing stones into the water. The Himalayas in the distance with their snow-capped peaks and their sides covered with green forests, added to the beauty of the scene.

Wedding customs, as has been said, are peculiar in this country. When the parents of a young couple are considering their marriage they first consult an oracle, or astrologer. If they find from him that the stars are propitious for a happy marriage they call the girl to them, one day, and inform her that she is going to a garden festival. They present her with new ribbons, combs and other articles of dress, telling her to make herself look as beautiful as possible.

Sometimes the girl does not mistrust and sometimes she does. But when she finds out she is to be married, she at once begins to cry, saying she does not wish to leave home. But her friends comfort and encourage her, and she becomes resigned. Then her family gives a series of banquets or farewell parties for her. Friends and relatives come and bring presents. Towards the close of the feasting the bridegroom's parents send a representative or middleman who acts as presiding dignitary of affairs, to receive the bride and conduct her with her friends to the home of the bridegroom's parents. His parents send presents and often large sums of money. It is considered etiquette for the bride's parents to appear a little reluctant about accepting these gifts.

The bridegroom's parents also send the wedding dress, and the bride must wear it whether she likes

it or not. They also send her a jewel of some kind, which is to be worn on the forehead, and which signifies the married woman. They give her other jewels, but chiefly what is to be worn at the ceremony. Many jewels had been given on this occasion, as the contracting parties were wealthy. There was some delay, however, in the ceremony owing to the late arrival of Buddhist priests, or Red Caps, as they are called, to distinguish them from the Yellow Cap of the Ladak, who were invited to hold a service in honor of the village gods. This is to inform the gods that the daughter is to be married and is to go away, and to request them to remain with the family instead of going with the bride. This is because they believe if the gods were to desert them and go with their daughter they would be reduced to poverty.

Then came the local priest who, standing before the bride, exhorted her, in a long discourse, to behave in her husband's house with kindness and obedience to all his family, and to wait upon his younger brothers and sisters and treat their servants as if they were all her own relatives. Next the father and mother came and talked to her likewise. Then followed the friends, who wept and caressed and advised as the others. By this time the bride had become slightly hysterical, and when they attempted to place her on a gaily decorated horse, for her journey, she broke into loud weeping and refused to go. Great excitement now prevailed, but finally she was consoled and the procession proceeded. On the way

there was more feasting by the friends and relatives who accompanied her.

She was now met half way by the bridegroom's relatives and friends and taken to the gate of his house to find it locked. Consternation possessed the English guests, until told that this was because of the fear, that as she has left her own gods behind, evil spirits may have followed her. So another ceremony must take place which drives them away. This is the throwing of an artificial sword which has first been charmed and blessed by a priest. Finally she was admitted to the house, when she again burst into loud lamentation saying she wished to return to her own home. Our English party now began to fear that the wedding would never be concluded after all. Kind-hearted Colonel Browne was about to appeal to the authorities to stop this unwilling marriage, when the bride again rallied. She became more cheerful and decided to go on with the undertaking. All this time her head was covered with a silken veil on which was written good wishes for her welfare. Now the mother of the groom appeared and offered each of the party a piece of wedding cake made from potato, flour, sugar, butter and sour milk. Then she led the bride and guests in to meet the groom, who seemed rather embarrassed by his bride's conduct. Now, another priest was called to inform the gods that a new member had been added to the household, and to request them to extend their blessing and protection to the bride. Then followed more feasting, after which the guests departed.

The ceremony to which our friends were invited having been carried out according to this program, they were returning to the villa, when another invitation was extended them to visit the Sera Monastery, about four miles from Lassa, and to be entertained at the Inn there, as the guests of the Minister of Finance, who had shown considerable attention to them since their arrival in the city. After considering a moment they decided to accept the polite offer.

There are several ruling powers in Lassa. The Grand Lama is the religious ruler and is supreme above all. The Chinese Deputy or "Ambam," as he is called, rules politically; but though he is in favor of treating foreigners with kindness and consideration, he has not sufficient power to protect them from insidious attacks.

There is a Cabinet composed of four Prime Ministers, also three of Finance. There are two Ministers of War, and a Minister of the Household, as well as a Minister of Justice, and four Grand Secretaries. Under the control of these latter are 165 priests. Under the control of the Prime Ministers are 165 laymen. These posts of Priests and Laymen are generally filled by men of the higher classes.

The Tibetan Government is a mixture of feudalism and modern government. In their early days the first man to receive a title was granted a tract of land in recognition of his services. He became a Lord of the Manor. The people of that place became his subjects. He was the master of their rights and

even of their lives. He levied taxes on them in proportion to their means, and all must pay.

There was one way of escape from this taxation and that was to become a monk. Many Priests took advantage of this. All Priests who enter the Order, even the wealthy ones, receive assistance from the government. Also presents and large sums of money from charitable persons. But the poor laymen receive no such help and must pay their taxes and support their families in addition. Often they are obliged to bind out their children at the age of ten years, for a long term, to assist the family finances.

There is another class, as has been said, whose influence is wonderful, not only over the people, but over the Ministers of the Government. The Grand Lama and the Priests fear this influence, for it has the power, on the death of a Grand Lama, of choosing his successor from several children born about the time of his death, it being supposed that his soul has passed into the body of one of these infants.

The class referred to, the Oracles, Astrologers and Magicians, are highly educated, especially in the Hidden Wisdom, the Occult lore, or Mysticism of the Yogi.

Such an one was the Head Magician. On the day the party went to visit the Sera Monastery, Count Kozlov decided to remain in Lassa a few hours longer. He had an object in this which he did not wish to make known. He had added to his valuable collection of curios everything available, including prayer wheels and mantrams. But he had been un-

able, so far, to beg or buy a small Buddha. He was determined to possess an image of the great God of this country, no matter what the cost or risk.

Finding that the Priests refused to sell any representation of their God, to a foreigner, he determined to steal one. That is, he engaged one of the soldiers of the party to go with him to the Temple of Yokang, and remove one of the smaller images from its pedestal. He paid the soldier well for his assistance, and besides he dropped five pounds into the alms box at the entrance of the temple. This arrangement he argued, was not stealing, but a scheme which ought to prove satisfactory to the bigoted Priests, should they ever find it out.

Therefore, the old Tibetan Monk turning a large prayer wheel above the alms box, was deeply impressed with the foreigner's generosity. But his gaze happening to reach further, he beheld the soldier returning from his expedition down one of the alcove niched and pillared corridors. He did not see the small Buddha which the soldier had removed from behind one of the pillars where it had stood on its pedestal. The Buddha was safely covered by the light military cape which the soldier had thrown over his arm. But he did at once observe that this foreign soldier had forgotten to remove his shoes from his feet before entering the Sacred Temple. Sandals always stood ready beside the entrance, and neither Priests, citizens nor strangers were permitted to desecrate the home of the great Buddha, in such a manner.

The old Priest doorkeeper gesticulated wildly, and continued to wave his hands in horror, long after Kozlov and the soldier had disappeared. His efforts finally attracted the attention of some priests who had just come out of the Temple, but the Count and his confederate were nowhere to be seen.

Chapter XI.

The Festival of Lights and the Festival of Monlam

The Sera Monastery four miles from Lassa, is divided into three departments. The first contains 3800 Priests, the second 2500, and the third 500. There are two classes of Priests, the scholar priests, and the warrior priests. The former class spend twenty years in study and graduate about the age of thirty-five. Their special study during these years is the Buddhist catechism, and also philosophy, which is the principal course of the monastery.

If a Priest is very clever, he receives his degree of doctor at the age of twenty-eight years. Central Tibet has two other large colleges, the Rebung Monastery of about eight or nine thousand students, and another at Ganden of thirty-three hundred students. The poorer Priests are the Warrior Priests, who live in the dormitories of the monastery. They make their own way through college by gathering from the fields and from the banks of the river, wood and other kinds of fuel which they sell to the scholar Priest students.

They perform menial services for them; and their daily tasks are also to prepare offerings for the deities, play on musical instruments, such as flutes

and flageolets, and beat drums. They go out daily to the hills and practise throwing stones at a target to strengthen their muscles. They run and jump and also sing popular songs, as they are very proud of their voices. They practise fighting with clubs.

This is a part of their business as they accompany the higher priests on their long journeys into the mountains and act as body guards for them. They are daring and will meet death with calmness. They perform their exercises two hours every day. Their food consists of baked flour in tea or gruel with rice and sometimes meat. Their food, and money also, is often given them by wealthy merchants, land-owners and high officers. Their humble dormitory consists only of one room with a bed of sheep's wool, a dirty cushion, a wooden bowl and a rosary.

They often take their bowls and go out to solicit food from wealthy people which is freely given them. Notwithstanding their poverty they are cheerful and will joke with the spectators at the religious festivities, and in addition are often arrested at these times for becoming drunk or getting into quarrels.

A great contrast to their manner of living is that of the scholar priests who are often quite wealthy. These in many cases often own land and cattle and even villa homes. This class also receive valuable gifts from wealthy citizens amounting to several thousand dollars. They occupy the best cottages outside the monastery and keep many servants, if they live on the college grounds.

There is also a middle class of priests who live in

free rooms at the monastery on seven or eight dollars a month. They often rent their rooms to the richer students, sleeping anywhere themselves. Thus they add to their incomes. Always the poorest have in their rooms a sack of flour on which they live when all else fails. If they receive a present of money they will hasten over to Lassa, four miles away, and at a cheap restaurant will indulge in a regular feast of macaroni or even meat.

The richer priests generally have some business on the side, while studying. First in importance comes the merchant profession, then agriculture, and last cattle raising. They manufacture Buddhist images, and paint Buddhist pictures for sale. There are tailors, shoemakers, carpenters and masons. Some of the wealthier priests own several thousand yak, and five or six thousand horses. They wear robes of very fine texture and drink very thick butter tea every morning. This is considered a great luxury and is only indulged in by the rich.

The poor priests drink tea made from the leaves that are left over, or which have been used by the rich priests, and without any butter in it. The rich priests, also the wealthy citizens, live on imported rice mixed with grapes, sugar, butter, cakes, made of flour, cheese and butter; gruel made of meat and other luxurious articles which the poor are seldom able to obtain.

It is against the teaching of the Buddhist to eat meat, and the Grand Lama never permits cattle to be

killed near his palace, yet he eats meat once a day, as do the higher priests.

The Festival of Lights is a celebration given in commemoration of the anniversary of the death of a great Lamist reformer. At this time every roof in Lassa and the adjoining villages are blazing with lights in honor of the occasion. Thousands of butter lamps, that is, burning butter, in brass receptables containing small wicks, light up the country all around, and present a sight never seen in any other part of the world. This festival is called by the Tibetan name, "Sangjoe," and lasts two weeks. During this time priests and laymen give themselves up to the greatest merriment and rejoicing. During this festival the middle class as well as the poor, have the privilege of begging from any wealthier person who comes to their homes. Clothed in their gala robes there is much visiting going on, much singing, dancing and feasting.

The religious ceremony of the feast is a vigil which is kept up every night from midnight to dawn. This consists in reading in assemblies gathered in the Temple, of holy texts from the Buddhist scriptures. During the reading a subdued chanting is heard up in the lofty galleries, making the performance impressive.

The immense hall is hung with glittering tapestries, the pillars wound with red material and also with floral decorations. Hung on the walls are paintings of religious celebrities, and scenes which are the master pieces of Tibet. All this is lighted by thousands

of lamps containing butter which, continually burning, give forth pure white rays.

The "Sangjoe" is also a great occasion of charity, the priests going round at the close of the services collecting alms. Sometimes against the rules, the young warrior priests will go around on a second or even third trip of begging. But if caught they are punished for this. These young priests wear long ringlet locks of hair on their temples, while the rest of their heads are shaved. If they are breaking any of the rules they conceal their locks and faces, or blacken their faces with lampblack and butter. These young priests will sometimes commit serious offenses, but at the same time are very careful not to kill any insect or animal.

As our party sat listening to the reading and the enchanted music in the brilliantly lighted hall, they almost felt that they had been transported to the region of Buddha himself.

But there was another festival for them to see, the Festival of "Monlam"; this word means supplication. This is a great Tibetan benefit for the reigning Emperor of China, an offering of prayer and supplication to the deities for his prosperity and long life. During the three days of preparation much gambling, profanity and vice go on. When the festival really begins, however, this is curtailed.

Priests arrive from the other monasteries and from all parts of Tibet. The citizens are obliged to offer several rooms to these outsiders. There are many lay visitors also, besides the priests. The population

of Lassa is generally doubled at this time, making it about 100,000. There are two commissioners appointed to take charge of affairs during this festival. They come from the large monastery at Rebung. They belong to the class of higher priests, but in spite of this, they act with total lack of principle on this occasion.

In the first place they have had to pay large bribes to get the position, often as high as a thousand pounds. They must get this money back from the people. They exercise complete control over both festivals. They often collect enough money at this time to live in luxury the rest of their lives. They exact heavy fines from the people for every trifling offense. They are always on the watch for offenses and sometimes create them.

The streets and doorways of Lassa are cleaned thoroughly once a year by law, before these great festivals. These commissioners will sometimes pretend that the streets have been imperfectly cleaned in certain localities, and will demand a fine from some unfortunate citizen, of ten pounds. If any parties engage in a quarrel at this time, they are also heavily fined with no reference to the justice of the dispute.

These are bad times for debtors also, for creditors can recover from those who owe them money, provided they will give half the sum obtained to the commissioners, who in return will force the payment. They order the debtor to pay at once under penalty of having his entire property confiscated. Therefore, to escape these exactions many citizens on the ap-

proach of these two festivals lock their valuables in the vaults or cellars of their houses, leave one or two trustworthy servants in charge of the property and the guests, and take themselves off to the mountains, where they can not be found. Sometimes one-tenth of the population will leave, if they are unfortunate enough to owe money at this time.

During these festivals the priests are forbidden to stay at homes where liquors are sold or where there are many women. The poorer priests pay for their lodgings from one shilling to a half crown a day, the wealthier ones pay from five to fifteen shillings per day.

This "Monlam" ceremony is performed several times daily, throughout the festival in the great Hall of Buddha, and the priests must then remain within the city limits. The finest spectacle is at night.

In the center of the hall is erected a platform protected by two dragons, and on this the offerings are laid. All around the platform is constructed a temporary enchanted garden in which are figures of the Buddha and of Lamas engaged in teaching mankind. These figures are made of butter, all beautifully painted and gilded. The Bird of Paradise often mentioned in the Buddhist books, is conspicuous among these models. There are as many as three hundred figures sometimes in this garden in the hall, all lighted with torches and lamps of burning butter.

Once this great sight was open to all, but such calamities followed the crowding of immense audiences into the Temple, that the exhibition became limited to

three hundred priests yearly. These are chosen by ballot, the same priest not being allowed to attend twice. This is considered a great privilege and honor.

The services open at eight o'clock in the evening and continue till two in the morning. Our friends had already witnessed the procession on the highway between Lassa and Sera. They saw the Chinese Amban as he passed, in his gorgeous carriage, which was lit up inside with two dozen silk lanterns. He was robed in the official garments of China. He wore on his head the cap denoting his rank. A cavalcade of Chinese officers preceded him and another of mounted guards followed him. These were all arrayed in resplendent uniform. After the procession of the "Amban" followed another of high priests. These were followed by laymen, and last of all by the four Premiers.

Every year during the Monlam, sixteen candidates are chosen from the different colleges, and given the degree of "Special Doctor." This degree being the most honorable one conferred upon Tibetan priests, only those of superior acquirements can obtain it. But there are inferior degrees which can be obtained. The attainment of these latter degrees may be greatly assisted by the payment of sums of money as bribes.

There was a standing army of about 5000 soldiers in and around Lassa. About half of them took part in a sword exhibition, which is a kind of military review. The different companies were designated by different colored strips of cloth falling down behind

from their helmets. Each soldier carried also a small flag of his company color. Some were armed with bows and arrows, others with guns. A large stand was erected in the courtyard of the Temple. At the booming of a signal gun, the soldiers marched around the stand on which the Grand Lama was expected to be seated.

The day our friends viewed the procession he was not, however, there. Priests came out of the Temple carrying drums and brass instruments; they beat these musical instruments and howled. They were all clad in a glittering brocade. They were followed by the Oracle priests heralded by the sword bearers. The great sword was four feet long and ornamented with strips of various colored silk. The Oracle priests were clad in gold brocaded robes, and wore on their heads gold head dresses.

At the end of the long procession came the Guardian Angel of all; and the tutor of all the young Grand Lamas. This great teacher has the instruction of an infant Grand Lama from his youth up. He is a papal tutor, a wise highly educated, good man. Dressed in a magnificent robe he is seated in a palanquin under an elaborate awning. To him is given the sacred sword, and he then goes through the ceremony of hurling it at any evil spirits which may be lurking around. This is supposed to avert evil from the reigning Chinese Emperor. This concludes the Monlam.

The next day before leaving the city for their homes, all the visitors carry, or hire a servant to

carry, a large stone from the hills and place it at the embankment of the river which flows around Lassa. This is to protect the city from floods. The country people bring these stones in from the suburbs, and sell them for this purpose to the citizens and departing guests. These stones while giving strength to the embankment, are at the same time supposed to atone for the sins of the donors. During these two festivals our friends had failed to catch a glimpse even, of the Grand Lama. But on the last day of the Festival of Lights, he was to appear in the Temple in Lassa to bless the people. Therefore the party of tourists determined to witness this ceremony on their return from the Sera Monastery.

Chapter XII.

A Warning and a Glimpse of the Grand Lama

Before leaving Sera Monastery the party made a tour of the grounds, finally coming out into the beautiful park which enclosed the entire building and its courtyard. They had been pleasantly entertained here through the kindness of the Chinese Deputy, who had taken it upon himself to render their stay in Lassa as pleasant as might be. For it was true that strangers were looked upon with much suspicion in the few cases in which they had been tolerated in the forbidden city. This suspicion was mostly among the religious officials and dignitaries. The Grand Lama was supposed to be in unison with them in their views.

He was at that time a middle-aged young man of about thirty-five. He had been carefully trained by the papal tutor during his youth and was a very thoughtful, intelligent and rather kindly disposed person. He was so sacredly respected that he was seldom seen except in the Portola Temple. He appeared at festivals occasionally, and passed through the suburbs frequently in his private palanquin on the road between his city residence and his beautiful summer retreat in the mountains. But the only occasion when

he could be seen by the people except for these momentary glimpses, were the periodical audiences in the Temple of Yokang. Here seated upon a raised dais, before a long table on which were placed offerings to him, he received gifts and blessed the people. At the end of the ceremony the great Yak curtain 80 feet high fell before him and shut him from their view.

So as Colonel Browne's little party sat in the beautiful park surrounding the Monastery of Sera, they laid their plans to visit the Temple of Yokang about four o'clock in the afternoon, before returning to the Villa Terrace.

During the entire time of their stay in Sera, Count Kozlov had been absent. He was completely engaged in plans of his own, as we have seen. The members of the party had not suffered from his absence, and his daughter had seemed relieved and more at ease. Seated upon the stone benches of the park, they so enjoyed the beautiful sight that they lingered, reluctant to say farewell forever to such a scene.

From a fountain near them, silvery streams of water rose high, sending a misty spray all around, as they fell into a circular stone basin beneath. Along a trickling little brook, feathery willows drooped their overhanging branches while birds twittered in their leaves. Stone statues of the ever present Buddha were seated upon pedestals here and there throughout the park. Flowers, plants and shrubs of rare kinds and beauty abounded everywhere.

As they sat resting and talking, a young warrior priest approached. He had a letter, or rather an

official looking document in his hand. He presented this to Colonel Browne, who at once recognized the seal of the Chinese Deputy upon it. The official "regretted that the Minister of Finance who had been appointed to look after their welfare had suddenly been recalled to Lassa. He regretted also that the end of the tourists' stay in the country was so near. He sincerely hoped that they had enjoyed themselves and would take with them pleasant recollections of their visit, and bade them a kind farewell."

Colonel Browne, greatly surprised, read the missive to the others. "This means," said he, "that we must go, and go soon."

"It certainly is a polite hint for us to depart," replied his wife.

"And we have not yet seen the Grand Lama," said Stephen Wyndham.

"We have tickets of admission from the Head Magician to the ceremony this afternoon," said Lieutenant Rolston. "I wonder if it will be safe for us to go."

"We certainly *will* attend that performance," replied the Colonel. "We could not be expected to leave this curious country without a glimpse at least of its greatest religious ruler."

"Then had we not better start immediately? It is growing late in the afternoon," said George Rolston.

"Yes, we will leave at once," answered the Colonel.

"Leave at once," repeated a solemn voice somewhere near them. The startled party turned and looked behind them and in every other direction also,

but no one was to be seen anywhere near. Nothing was to be heard either, except the trickling of the brook, the twittering of the birds, and the quiet plashing of the fountain.

"We must leave Lassa soon; I feel that the Grand Lama desires it," said Lieutenant Rolston. "The Grand Lama desires it," echoed the solemn voice. No one dared speak again; but Rolston and Stephen got up from the bench, and went carefully behind the fountain and behind the willow trees. They examined every statue of Buddha, thinking there might be some Delphic Oracle secreted behind, or inside, or beneath it. But nothing was to be seen or heard.

Then the party silently arose and filed down the long path between the flower beds, to the arched stone entrance of the park, which was the only exit into the country beyond, and where lay the road to Lassa, four miles distant. Here horses were waiting for them. As they passed through the large arch or exit from the grounds, Colonel Browne turned for a last look at the romantic park. "Beautiful Sera, farewell, farewell," said he.

"Farewell, farewell," repeated the mournful voice.

They hastened to the horses which were waiting. They hurriedly mounted and rode down the highway in silence. The short journey was soon over. As they approached the city, they saw notices posted on the trees here and there along the road.

They asked the Tibetan guide the meaning of them, and he told them they were instructions lately placed there by the Chinese Amban to the citizens telling

them not to molest or interfere with any foreigners in the city or suburbs. These notices evidently had been considered necessary by their friend, the Chinese Deputy, and they appreciated his protection. It made them hasten still more their movements.

As they reached the Temple of Yokang they saw, by the crowds passing it, that the service was about to begin. In considerable trepidation they dismounted and following the people entered the corridors. Here they were obliged to remove their foot gear and put on sandals. They passed through the main corridor and took up their position just inside the Temple door, thinking it best under the circumstances to remain in the background.

A Tibetan guard, holding upright a long spear, received their checks as they passed into the sanctuary, regarding them curiously as he did so.

At the far end of the dimly lighted Temple Hall, there rose a magnificent dais, just beyond the lifted Yak curtain which separated the audience room from the private rooms beyond. Upon the elevated dais there was seated a figure which at first glance our friends took to be a Buddha. Around him on all sides and upon the long table in front of him were burning row upon row of butter lamps. Becoming accustomed to the dim light they saw the eyes of the apparent statue move. It was the Grand Lama. A silent immovable sphinx-like face and figure, yet calm and spiritual in appearance.

For the fraction of a moment those piercing, penetrating, shrewd eyes rested upon the English party,

recognizing them as strangers to the city and country. Then they turned instantly to the vast audience who stood in waiting. A subdued, yet harmonious chanting seemed to come from alcoves or galleries of the lofty ceiling and fall in rythmic waves all around them, but the singers, the musicians, were invisible. Presently it ceased. And with its ending the people sank on their knees upon the floor. The English tourists did the same, not wishing to incur the displeasure of any guards or priests. Then after an instant of hushed silence arose a low, murmuring, yet vibratory and distinct voice. Rising and falling in melodious sonorous tones it penetrated the great hall, finally dying away in the distant recesses.

The Grand Lama had blessed his people, his superstitious children who looked to him as the visible representative of an invisible supreme power. His hands were stretched benignly out over the audience. The long table in front of him was covered with gifts from the adoring crowd. Waving his hands over them again, he sank back upon the dais and the heavy Yak curtain fell in front of him shutting him from view.

The hushed sound of rising and leaving the Temple was unbroken by words. No one was permitted to speak in the building; they passed noiselessly out and the ceremony was over.

As the English party approached the Villa on the Terrace, to their consternation they saw a band of Tibetan soldiers engaged in a violent altercation with their own soldiers near the entrance gate. Before they could reach the spot, however, a palanquin rap-

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idly approached. From it descended the Head Magician. Raising his hand majestically in the air, the riot at once stopped. Both Tibetan and English soldiers seemed hypnotized or awed into silence. He vanished inside the gate, to reappear a moment or two later with Count Kozlov, the latter looking very pale and subdued. In his hands the Magician held a small bronze Buddha, which he lifted up in sight of the Tibetans.

Instantly they prostrated themselves upon the ground. Then the Magician addressed them in their own language telling them that the foreigner returned their God, regretting the desecration of his unsandaled feet upon the sacred floor of their holy Temple, and that he offered a large sum of gold, in amount about twenty pounds, as atonement. This was satisfactory, as the Tibetans now departed, followed by about fifty priests, who had been in the background.

Kozlov disappeared within the Villa, and Colonel Browne approached the Magician, saluted him and inquired the cause of the disturbance. He was soon in possession of the facts relating to the theft of the Buddha and the desecration of the Temple. The Magician told him that Kozlov had sent a messenger to him asking him for his protection, as the incensed priests had brought the Tibetan soldiers to the Villa and were goading them on to arrest the offender. The English soldiers were outnumbered, and the great man had arrived just in time.

Colonel Browne told him of the strange occurrence in the park at Sera Monastery.

"Yes," said the Magician, "these things happen in Tibet. Lassa is the home of the Gods; they sometimes warn through human means. You heard a voice; it was a kindly meant warning. It would be well to heed it, my brother, and leave soon. This government is suspicious of foreigners, and the religious authorities dislike them. Hasten your departure. It is best."

Chapter XIII.

At the Turquoise Bridge

That very evening the little party prepared to leave Lassa the next morning. It required but a few hours to put them in readiness for the journey. Their preparations were not completed, however, when a small deputation arrived to say farewell, and wish them a safe and prosperous trip. The Minister of Finance was at the head of the delegation, which was composed of some half dozen influential citizens whose acquaintance they had made during their short stay. Their friendliness seemed sincere and convinced the entire party that it was not the civil or political authorities who wished their withdrawal from the city, but the religious.

Late that night Lieutenant Rolston observed several Tibetan guards in various corners of the villa grounds. They had been sent, simply to ascertain that the English tourists really left, on the morning of the next day. They admitted this to one of Colonel Browne's Hindoo servants. This information would no doubt be speedily conveyed to the Grand Lama, and his religious officials.

With the early dawn the party started. As they rode down the Linkow on their horses, they passed

many of the poorer people who had received gifts and financial assistance from the generous English and really regretted their departure.

They reached the Turquoise bridge and paused to take a last look at its wonderful Chinese tiled roof, each tile in the ceiling being of a beautiful turquoise blue color.

As they paused for a moment, two ferrymen left their boats beneath the bridge and approached Colonel Browne; one of them handing him a scrap of paper with Tibetan writing on it. The Colonel handed it to the interpreter who accompanied the party. Having read it, the latter informed the Colonel that the ferrymen were the brothers of the robber who had stolen the Amulet necklace, and therefore, according to the custom of Tibet were the other husbands of the widow. He explained that the woman desired an interview with Count Kozlov, the owner of the Amulet, and the person who had been the means of her best husband's death. For now that he had departed she claimed that she had lost the most agreeable one, also the best provider of the family support. His virtues had become greatly enhanced by his untimely taking off. Now she desired some reparation in money, as the remaining husbands were very shiftless and of no account.

Count Kozlov indignantly refused to negotiate with her. Colonel Browne, however, considered it policy to make her a slight financial gift under the circumstances. "I will go and settle with her," said he, "but let me take the Amulet with me. In case her de-

mands become unreasonable, the sight of that will recall her experience with the Head Magician and she will fear his displeasure."

So the Count reluctantly handed over the necklace and the Colonel fastened it conspicuously to his watch. Then he and the interpreter departed for the widow's cottage, which could be seen at a short distance away; the two ferrymen, the brothers of the dead robber (the other husbands of the widow) leading the way. They reached the place and entered. Fifteen minutes passed, then half an hour, and the party becoming impatient, proceeded slowly towards the cottage.

At last they saw the cottage door open; it opened, but no one emerged except the interpreter, and it was violently slammed after him. As he drew near, Count Kozlov impatiently demanded the cause of the delay. Much chagrined the interpreter explained with many apologies, that the widow had taken a sudden and violent liking to Colonel Browne, and that now in place of financial reparation, she preferred the Colonel. That he should take the place of the departed was all that would now console her.

In fact, she insisted upon his remaining, her other husbands at her request keeping guard over him and preventing his leaving. The Colonel had sent by the interpreter a note which he handed to Lieutenant Rolston, who read the following: "For God's sake get me away from this woman. Send for the Head Magician." Lieutenant Rolston quickly despatched the interpreter for the Magician, although Kozlov was strongly in favor of sending the soldiers instantly

to break into the cottage, rescue the Colonel, and then depart at once from the country, where ill luck seemed to pursue them of late. As for Mrs. Browne she was speechless with indignation. They waited impatiently, however, until in the distance the Magician was seen approaching, being borne rapidly along in his stately palanquin.

He proceeded directly to the cottage, but to their surprise he did not enter. Instead he alighted from his conveyance, bearing in his hands a small brass bowl. He applied to the contents of the receptacle a match, and set the bowl upon the doorstep of the cottage. Then he retired a short distance and seated himself upon a large flat stone. Very soon sulphurous fumes arose, which penetrated not only the cottage, but the entire surrounding atmosphere. The English party were obliged to retreat from the position they had taken, to some distance, covering their faces from the obnoxious vapors. Even the palanquin bearers quickly fled across the road.

For some moments the Magician sat calmly gazing skyward, now and then repeating the words of a strange incantation. In this way ten minutes passed, and Mrs. Browne was with difficulty restrained from attempting to enter the cottage, when its door suddenly burst open. The next moment the Colonel was propelled with terrific force, through the aperture, and landed in the middle of the road in a dazed condition, while Mrs. Browne rushed to his side. A moment later his white helmet hat followed him and landed in the dust beside him, having been projected

by the same volcanic force which had hurled the Colonel himself, being no other than the irate widow. The door was then violently slammed and the siege appeared to be ended.

The Magician arose and, taking his brass bowl, was withdrawing to his palanquin, when Stephen Wyndham and George Rolston hastened to thank him for his assistance; at the same time begging him to explain in what manner he had wrought such a miracle. "It can be explained," said the great man, but may not be comprehended, perhaps, by Europeans. This is the land of Occult wisdom. There are strange and hidden forces which may be enlisted by man and made to do his will, when once he understands and controls the law by which they work. We Magicians have spent our lives for many incarnations striving to attain this knowledge. But in a few words as pertaining to this particular event, you know there are such things as talismen? These are charms which work toward the obtaining of certain desired objects by the possessor. This woman was using such a charm. She had become infatuated with our friend the Colonel, and she was using on him a powerful magnetic talisman. This, in a short time, would have so completely controlled him that he would not only desire to remain, instead of desiring to escape, but would also have entirely reciprocated her sudden and powerful affection. In fact, he could not have been induced or compelled to leave her home, unless you had used force. I simply worked another charm, or antidote, as you might call it,

which neutralized the effect of hers and also made her dislike him as completely as, before, she had liked him. Therefore she ejected him from her house with violent antipathy."

On hearing this Mrs. Browne again became speechless with horror and indignation, while the unfortunate Colonel was seized with a nervous chill. His teeth chattered with fright, and he had to be led away, and restoratives hastily applied.

Count Kozlov now hurried the movements of the party, determined to leave the country as soon as rapid traveling would permit. He began to believe in the mysterious power of the Amulet. Even the good Colonel had not escaped.

No telling how soon, or in what way, or on whom, its evil influence would fall next. The Magician said that he would accompany the party to the last Challenge Gate; he would see them safely on the highway, that nothing more might befall them within the limitations of Lassa. So they rode over the Turquoise Bridge, and under its wonderfully beautiful tiled roof for the last time. They looked in farewell upon the sparkling river and upon the white pinnacled, red roofed, golden towered, mysterious forbidden city, a city in a wonderful land, all, all of which would henceforth be but as a memory of a fleeting dream.

The Magician in his palanquin went ahead and escorted the party through the five Challenge Gates. His word was law to guards and deputies. The foreigners were allowed to pass through with no detention, with no argument. The party thanked him;

Colonel Browne, especially, bidding him a grateful farewell.

Stephen Wyndham and Irene Kozlov lingered a moment beside the last gate, after the others had ridden on. Just within its arch stood the Magician, those far-seeing eyes fixed upon them. At last he spoke: "Farewell, my children! Remember; ever onward, ever upward! And as you climb, reach back a helping hand to those who toil behind you."

"Oh," said Irene, "you have helped us greatly; you have taught us much; shall we never meet again?"

The Great Man looked upon them with a benignant expression as of one who bids his pupils farewell, at the close of a term in life's school, before a long, long vacation.

Then lifting an impressive hand, he pointed upward toward the white fleecy clouds in the distant blue azure. "Yonder," he replied, "yonder, in Nirvana, the Blessed."

And as they passed on, their last lingering gaze beheld this great Adept, still pointing upward, to that abode of bliss.

Chapter XIV.

A Wild Night Ride

After Stephen and Irene left the Magician, his words of wisdom and admonition lingered continually in their minds. Stephen felt certain that everything would end as he wished, and he determined to go up to Leh the capital of Ladak (or lesser Tibet) and perhaps from there to Kashmir. Could he carry out this plan he felt sure that Irene would be won over. That she would consent to their marriage, he believed, if he could find out the cause of her father's objections and overcome it. But Irene remembered the prediction of the Magician that a temporary obstacle or hindrance would arise and that this would cause them almost to despair, for the time being. Yet she, too, believed now that eventually things might shape themselves to change the gloomy conditions of her life. In what way this would come about was impossible for her to imagine at present.

Their interpreter had given them a strange piece of information: "It is believed," said he, "in oriental countries, especially in India and Tibet, that certain advanced beings reincarnate frequently; and they do this to help mankind by guiding, directing and encouraging them in their struggle towards a higher

development in the attainment of a spiritual nature. There are but few of these advanced beings on earth at any one time, and they live so quietly and act in so undemonstrative a manner that they are hardly recognized by the people around them except by their superior wisdom, their just and upright lives, and their forgetfulness of self in service to others.

"There is one other way in which they may be known to the keen observer and student of occultism. This is by the mystic far-reaching look of wisdom and acquired experience, which radiates or shines forth from their wonderful eyes. It is believed that they have had many, *many* existences," continued the interpreter, "and also that they will continue to return to earth until the race shall have attained the final goal. These beings have sacrificed their advancement and promotion in the other, and greater world, that they may return here to help men.

"It is believed that very few are on earth today, but of these the greater two are in Asia; one is in Lassa, Tibet, and is called the Head Magician.. The other is in Leh, the capital city of Ladak, and is a Mahatma hermit, more advanced and more wonderful even than the Magician of Lassa. He is called the 'White Mahatma of Ladak,' and sometimes the 'Wise Man of Leh.'

"The superficial reader, the man of ordinary information, as well as the religious critic, who has not made a thorough study of occultism, erroneously believes that all Magicians and all Mahatmas are deceivers, fakirs, and very ignorant wicked persons.

The truth is, that they have only come in contact with the one kind of individual who deals in what is called 'Black Magic.' The other kind commonly called 'White Magicians' or 'Mahatmas' are educated far beyond the people who criticise them.

"Their religion, their charity indeed, is so great that *they* do not criticise even those who berate them. They never take money for their services, and they look ahead with that broad philanthropic vision, which sees these very critics, in the course of time, so progressed that they admit all these things which today they deny."

This information made the two young people very anxious to see the Mahatma of Ladak. Colonel and Mrs. Browne were to leave them at Shigatze, the second city of Tibet. They would take with them a few of the soldiers as a guard, a means of protection, while they journeyed south to India.

Lieutenant George Rolston and the rest of the soldiers would go on through Ladak to Kashmir, where they were to be stationed indefinitely at an English settlement in Serinagur, the capital city of Kashmir. Count Kozlov and his daughter would go with them, also the Hindoo woman Kirza, whom Mrs. Browne had passed over to Irene as a faithful and devoted servant.

After the experience of the Turquoise Bridge the entire party began to regard the Amulet with respect, if not with fear. Kozlov would not now allow it out of his own keeping. He had paid too high a price to lose it, besides when once he had discovered the se-

cret of its working, he believed he would be able to use it with effect upon certain of his enemies.

Another thought passed through his mind, which, unprincipled as he was, made him hesitate. His step-daughter stood in the way of his future plans. He had long wished her removed. Perhaps with this strange, evil-working Amulet, lay the solution of his difficulties. In the meantime he would be careful; he would not wear it, but would put it carefully in his baggage which was strapped upon one side of one of the horses.

In the meantime they were passing over the great road between Lassa and Shigatze, a city of about 30,000 population. So far the highway had not been lonely. They had met a caravan of merchants returning from India and Nepal with commodities purchased in those countries. In the night another had passed them while they were camping. The confused murmur of voices, the occasional shouts, and the neighing of horses had penetrated their tents.

The second night the tramp of many feet aroused them from their sleep. Gazing out into the moonlight they saw a band of white-robed pilgrims journeying toward Lassa, on some religious mission. The third day, as they neared Shigatze Pass, there hurried by them, their bells jingling merrily, the mail runners on the last stage of their journey to the Forbidden City.

In their wake came two Tibetan officers guarding two prisoners who were clothed in the regulation costume of the murderer, the color of which denoted

their crime. The party were told by the interpreter that these men had, a few nights before in Shigatze Pass, murdered two wealthy Chinese travelers. The government had offered a very large reward for their arrest, which soon followed. This incident did not tend to decrease the fears which Colonel Browne and Lieutenant Rolston felt, about going through this notoriously dangerous Pass of Shigatze. This narrow cut, through the mountains, was beset with brigands. As they approached it, too, night was coming on.

Just beyond, several miles distant, was the City of Shigatze; and Colonel Browne desired to make it that night. They were expecting mail there, besides, they who were returning to India might make an early start the next day. George Rolston felt that it was unwise to risk going through the narrow defile after dark, in fact the interpreter had advised against it, knowing the danger. George would have preferred to camp in the open on this side of the Pass, until morning, but he felt that he must defer to his superior officer.

Just before reaching the spot, a light misty rain began to fall. While they hesitated considering the matter, through the cut came a dozen mountaineer coolies with a number of closed "Kangoes" or long palanquins covered with yellow oiled silk. They had come from Shigatze when the rain began to fall, looking for possible customers, or travelers who might desire to exchange their exposed places on horseback for the protection of the covered vehicles.

These palanquin were borne along by means of poles on each side; a coolie at each of the four ends, bearing a pole, making four carriers in all. The other coolies acted as relays for the bearers.

Colonel Browne insisted that his wife, Irene Kozlov, and Kirza the maid, should each enter a palanquin; and his wife consented, provided that he would take one himself. This he did to please her, and they proceeded on their way. They had journeyed along in the darkness and the increasing misty rain, for what seemed to Mrs. Browne a long time. She had fallen asleep in fact, with the monotonous jogging motion, and the still more monotonous chant of the bearers. Suddenly she awakened and looked out from her closely shut curtains. No one was behind her. The Colonel's palanquin had disappeared. She looked ahead and saw the two, in which were Irene and Kirza, though neither of the women were visible behind their oiled silk curtains. She called to Irene, who put her head out of the covered opening.

"Where are we, Mrs. Browne?" asked Irene. "And where is the Colonel? I have called you twice before, but you did not hear me."

"I do not know, Irene, I must have been asleep. The Colonel has disappeared, and so have the soldiers."

"We are on the highway, I can see that," replied Irene. Just then Kirza put out her head from her conveyance in front of Irene. "We are alone, mistress," said she; "and there is a large lake below us, at the foot of the steep road." Mrs. Browne now at-

tempted, by means of a few sentences of the Tibetan language which she had acquired, to converse with the coolie bearers. "Where is the master?" she asked them. In reply they only laughed. "Please wait a moment till he overtakes us," said she. In response to this they hurried only the faster, laughing insultingly as they went. For a few moments, nothing more was said, then suddenly the bearers left the road, and descended to the margin of the lake, whose broad expanse now became clearly visible. Here they set down all three palanquin.

Then they went up to the road again, crossed it to the other side, and out of intelligible hearing distance began to discuss some projects they evidently had in view. While nothing could be understood, yet their voices became loud and excited. All the coolies, both bearers and relays, were taking part in the argument. For such it certainly was. Some of them seemed to be in favor of the plan, whatever it was, while others evidently opposed it. During these moments Mrs. Browne suddenly remembered that the Colonel had placed in her palanquin a small bag containing papers and a large sum of money. Suspicion began to take fearful possession of her. Irene leaned from her palanquin and asked again, now in frightened tones, "Mrs. Browne, what *are* they going to do with us?"

"I don't know," exclaimed the Colonel's wife in despairing accents. Then silence fell upon the three women. Each of them, even the Hindoo woman, recognized now their danger. Kirza leaned far out

of her conveyance, as if she would protect the other two women, if it were possible.

They did not speak again for what seemed ten minutes. But Mrs. Browne thought, "Well, I shall be murdered first, for I have the money, and they know it." But to do her justice she feared for Irene as well. "The villains," she exclaimed mentally, and then, "Oh, where is the Colonel, and where are the soldiers and George Rolston?" Soon after this pause the discussion of the coolies ended. They hurried back to the occupants of the kangoes. All three women drew a long breath. "This is the last of us," thought each one, resigning themselves to the inevitable.

The men paused beside them,—then just as the women closed their eyes to meet their doom—the coolies took up the poles of the conveyances and began to trot along to their monotonous chant of "hi-hi."

Irene took courage and looked out. "We are on the highway again," she called to Mrs. Browne. Before that good woman could answer, they were startled by sudden shots from revolvers, by loud shouts, and the tramping of horses' feet in their rear. Whatever the cause of their desertion, the soldiers and officers were now rapidly approaching. Colonel Browne was ahead, as was evident from his loud excited commands, mingled with a mild form of profanity. "Great Scott," he yelled, "that villain nearly got you then, Stephen," as the latter approached hat-

less, and flourishing a heavy walking stick at a brigand in his rear.

The Colonel and Stephen had rushed ahead of the others, fearing for the safety of the three women. They now stopped the coolie bearers, and explanations were made on all sides, while the fray continued between Lieutenant Rolston and a party of brigands or mountain robbers.

Such they were indeed, and they had lain in wait for the foreigners concealed in the bushes on the side of the Pass. To the latest day of their lives, the English party never knew the real truth of affairs that night. They never knew whether the coolie bearers with their palanquin, were in league with the brigands or not. But one thing they *did* learn on their arrival in Shigatze the next morning. They learned that at the very place beside the deep lake, near the highway, where the coolies took the three women, and set them down in their kangoes, were found a few days before, the bodies of the wealthy Chinese travelers who had been murdered by the two criminals they had met in charge of officers on the highway, just before entering the Pass.

Still the noise of the fray in the rear of the women was continuing, and it is doubtful how it would have ended, for the robbers were many.

But suddenly from afar in front, came the sound of a bugle. Clear and strong echoed the warning note; and in a moment there rode into view on the plain from the direction of Shigatze, a long caravan of mounted monks: with torches waving and with a

clashing of cymbals, interspersed now and again with the insistent call of the bugle they rapidly approached the Colonel, Stephen Wyndham, and the three women.

With the first note of the bugle, the brigands, who were all this time mounted on wild Tibetan ponies, ceased their dagger thrusts and their attempted pillage. For a part of them had been trying to detach the baggage-laden horses from the others, and had succeeded in driving the one which carried Count Kozlov's baggage, with another, on towards the distant mountains while their companions continued the fight. Another blast from the bugle and the brigands wheeled. On their swift ponies they flashed back to the mountains, driving the two detached baggage-laden horses ahead of them. Count Kozlov's horse fell dead in the flight, while the other suddenly paused and refused to move.

But now the monks were in full pursuit, the bugle keeping up its notes, until, finally, the last brigand had disappeared in his mountain retreat beyond a ledge of rocks far to the south. Then the monks returned. "We were having a hard battle when you arrived," said George Rolston to the leader of the caravan. "We appreciate your timely assistance; but you carry no weapons; how is it that the robbers were so easily routed?"

"The brigands of this country fear the priesthood," replied the leader. We carry no weapons, it is true. Ours is a mission of peace, and good will. Yet the most hardened outlaw will flee at the first clash of our cymbals; yes, at the first sight of the priestly robe.

Such is their reverence for the religion of this country. Superstition forms a part of it. Not that this prevents them from depredation, if they can commit it unknown to the religious authorities. But they know if discovered their punishment is sure; first by the government, and then often by some strange occult power wielded by the Magicians.

"And now, friends, we are on our way to Lassa; but we will return with you to Shigatze, that you may encounter no more dangers."

Lieutenant Rolston and Stephen protested against this trouble on the part of the Monks, but the ladies thankfully accepted their kindly offer.

It was now discovered that the Amulet had again disappeared. Also other jewelry and some valuable clothing were missing. The Count refused to proceed at first. He insisted on following the robbers to recover his treasures, especially the Amulet. The Monks, however, dissuaded him, promising to send out officers, from Shigatze, to their rocky lair in the mountains.

So accompanied by the kind brotherhood, who now began to carol merrily their minstrel lays, occasionally breaking into a more serious strain or a solemn chant, they rode onward, reaching Shigatze just as the sun was rising. Then having spoken with the officials regarding the restoration of the stolen goods, the caravan turned, and once more proceeded on its way to Lassa.

Chapter XV.

The Colonel is Captured by the Robbers

In the confusion of the battle with the brigands and the excitement attending the arrival of the caravan of monks, it was not observed that Colonel Browne, after assuring himself of the safety of the women, had returned to the scene of the skirmish.

Neither was it noticed when the procession started for Shigatze, that the Colonel was missing.

Mrs. Browne supposed him at the rear of the Pass with Lieutenant Rolston. The latter believed him at the front with his wife. The fact was entirely different.

When the Colonel had again entered the fray, he found the brigands retreating. He followed them a short distance on one of the horses.

Then he saw ahead of him, out on the plain, the two horses which had been detached from the party and driven away by the robbers.

Kozlov's horse, as has been said, had fallen dead; and Colonel Browne determined to rescue the baggage upon it. With this purpose in view he rode to the spot and alighted. The other horse, which the bandits had taken, was grazing near by. He succeeded in turning this one back towards the Pass, by

driving it a short distance with his whip. Then he attempted to rescue Count Kozlov's valuables with the Amulet.

If there was one thing of which the Colonel was perfectly sure, it was that he would never again have anything more to do with that Amulet.

But Fate has an unpleasant way of compelling us to do the very thing we are resolved we will *not* do.

Therefore, when he found the Amulet, knowing the value the Count attached to it, the Colonel felt that he must secure it. He could offer no reasonable excuse for doing otherwise, when he should meet Kozlov, on his return.

So with a feeling of impatience, because he could not help himself in the matter, he put the necklace in a chamois bag, in which he carried valuable papers, and stowed it safely away under his coat.

He had just accomplished this, when silently and swiftly, as the shadows of night, four fierce-looking brigands appeared from behind a pile of rocks and stones near by.

These stones formed a kind of shrine at which pilgrims often stopped in their caravan journeys through the country.

The bandits had secreted themselves here with the intention of securing the baggage of the two horses when everything was quiet again.

They had already lost the booty from the horse which the Colonel had driven back towards the Pass. The goods from the other horse they meant to retain.

Therefore, they surrounded the now thoroughly

alarmed Colonel, forced him to mount his own horse, and drove him ahead of them towards the mountains, taking with them Kozlov's baggage.

After a long gallop they arrived at a large cave in the hills. Into this they drove their prisoner, who, by this time, had resigned himself to an ignominious and unpleasant end.

But the robbers had other plans for him. While two of them stood guard over him the other two prepared a curious-looking document, over which there was much argument.

They were writing out a notice in the Tibetan language, which announced that the *"fat foreigner,"* as they designated him, was held for a "ransom" of two thousand pounds.

They also stated that the money must be placed under a large stone near the entrance to the Pass.

If this was done, the Colonel would be set free within half an hour afterwards; failing this, he must die.

When this document was finished, one of the robbers departed with it, for Shigatze, where it would be sent to the prisoner's friends at the hotel.

Then the other three robbers told the Colonel to sit down upon a pile of sacks in a corner of the cave, while they prepared their meal.

The place was lighted by an iron lantern, and two of the men ate their breakfast while the other guarded their prisoner.

Then they offered the latter food, which he re-

fused. However, he accepted a drink of wine, which proved to have been drugged.

Unsuspectingly the Colonel drank, and very soon fell asleep on the pile of sacks.

He slept soundly for several hours. When he awoke it was past the noon hour, and he found that he was alone in the cave. Through a small opening he could see daylight. He went towards this and found that the mouth of the cave had been blocked from the outside by rocks and large stones.

He then made another discovery. His outer apparel was missing; coat, vest and trousers were gone, and with them his papers, money and the Amulet. Nothing had been left him by the brigands but his underclothing, his white helmet hat, and his green silk umbrella.

It was a terrible situation. His life had been spared, but it might not be for long.

He examined the aperture in the mouth of the cave. A thin man might possibly have squeezed through it, but not the stout Colonel.

What to do he did not know. The time was passing. His captors might return at any moment. He tried to make the opening larger, but in vain. The large stones could not be moved by any effort from the inside of the cave.

He was about to give up all hope, when he heard outside his prison, at some distance, but drawing nearer, a monotonous chanting.

He put his head through the opening and looked toward the sound.

Yes! Fate had interposed to save him. A pilgrim priest was approaching. He might yet be rescued.

With loud shouts he attracted the attention of the stranger, who drew near with much curiosity in his face.

The Colonel did indeed present a strange sight, in his scant attire, his white helmet hat upon his head, and his green umbrella in his hand. The latter he had been using in his attempt to knock away the rocks from the entrance of the cave.

"What dost thou here, brother?" demanded the priest, in a mixture of Tibetan, Hindoo and English dialect.

"I have been captured by brigands, and I desire to escape," replied the Colonel.

"Ha!" ejaculated the other; "the evil ones beset thee, did they? Well, we must rescue thee at once. Canst crawl through that opening?"

"No, I cannot," said the Colonel.

"Truly, thou canst not, brother," replied the priest, estimating first the size of the Colonel, and then that of the aperture. "It would be dangerous for thee."

"These foreigners," he muttered in the Tibetan language in an undertone, "partake too often of the forbidden flesh. They feed upon their brothers, the ox, the sheep, and the pig. 'Tis a sinful practice; for all, whether great or small, are upon the 'Way.' Should we then throw these lesser ones backward, in their slow progress toward deliverance?"

This soliloquy, which was called forth by the cor-

pulency of the Colonel, the latter did not understand; but he saw that the priest intended to help him; for now he lifted a stout pilgrim staff which he carried.

This staff had, upon one end, a prong or hook, and was used in mountainous journeys. With the aid of this, the priest began to dig away, at several small rocks at the very top of the opening to the cave, and finally succeeded in detaching them.

Having enlarged the opening more to the Colonel's size, he said, "hand me first thy umbrella and thy hat."

The Colonel did this. "Now try and crawl through. We will assist thee from this side."

The Colonel drew himself up and managed to get, first his head, and then half his body, through the narrow opening; but there he stuck; and neither by his own efforts, nor those of the priest, could he be drawn another inch further.

"Feeders upon flesh! Unrighteous devourers of their brothers, the animals! Must thou then *die* of thy sinful gluttonny?" exclaimed the priest, under his breath, while the Colonel dangled helplessly on both sides of the aperture.

Then addressing the prisoner, "Patience, brother; one more stone and thou art free."

Seizing the pronged staff again, he dealt such a terrific blow upon a stone, that it was suddenly precipitated, and the unfortunate Colonel with it, upon the ground, on the outer side of the cave.

Speechless, and almost senseless, greatly bruised and battered, he picked himself up, replaced the hel-

met upon his head, and as the sun was now growing warmer, he opened the green silk umbrella.

"Is that all the rascals left thee?" enquired the priest, as he gazed at the Colonel's sorry appearance.

"All," answered the latter; "they took my money and papers, too."

"Well, well, brother, something must be done."

Here the priest divested himself of his own robe and a curious high, yellow Tibetan hat.

"Take these," said he; "put them on thyself and escape for thy life. It is high time, for the scoundrels may return at any moment."

"But you, what will you do?" said the Colonel.

"My Order protects me; see this symbol"; and the priest held up a small charm. Upon a red enamel surface, was a golden circle; within this a triangle; and within the latter strange hieroglyphics in black enamel.

"This will show the robbers who I am; they will not molest me, when they see it," said the priest.

Then he unrolled a pack which he carried, and took out yard upon yard of rich Oriental cashmere, of a dark blue color, with which he swathed himself from head to foot. He now appeared like a respectable merchant from India, who would be certain to carry arms upon his person.

Last of all, he handed to the Colonel his long rosary of sacred black beads.

"If any one speaks to thee upon the road," he said, "this rosary will be a safeguard. All know the symbols we carry. And one thing more: I give thee a

'mantram'—a secret arrangement of words, which are powerful to protect thee."

"In case of danger say these words over to the enemy, and he can not harm thee. It must be thy last resort; for we injure none needlessly."

He handed the Colonel a paper, on which were written a few lines in Tibetan. He repeated them over, until his listener had acquired something of the correct accent.

"Now hasten, brother; I will remain here awhile to rest, and then proceed toward Lassa, which lies in an opposite direction from thine."

"Leave these garments at the hotel in Shigatze, and I will get them on my return."

Chapter XVI.

The Colonel's Escape

The priest seated himself upon a stone at the mouth of the cave to rest, before continuing his journey.

He opened his pack and took out bread and wine with which to refresh himself. If he, like some of his Order, refused to eat the bodies of his "brothers," the ox, the sheep, and the pig, he now began to devour the flesh of his *sisters,* the fish and the fowl; so hard is it to draw the line.

He waved farewell to the Colonel, as the latter departed on the road to the "Pass," four miles beyond which lay Shigatze.

The Colonel was indeed a strange sight. The priestly robe increased his circumference, and as he proceeded rapidly, gave him a waddling gait.

The high yellow hat caused him to resemble thoroughly one of the "Yellow Cap" monks, who often travelled that road from Ladak to Lassa.

They went to obtain information from the great temples there, or to acquire merit from the journey.

At Lassa dwelt the Order of the "Red Caps," and to their religious gatherings the "Yellow Caps" from Ladak often went on pilgrimages.

Colonel Browne carried in one hand a bundle which

consisted of his white helmet hat. In the other he held over his head his green silk umbrella. Around his neck was the rosary, and in the hand which held the bundle, he also carried the "mantram" at which he gazed frequently in the endeavor to commit it to memory.

Had he known the fearful import of these lines which the priest had given him as a protection from molestation by the brigands, he would hardly have dared to use it.

But he was wholly unconscious of their interpretation.

The mantram was in the form of a "curse," and read as follows, when translated into the English language:

"Bound, and fast held, be thy mouth, and fast held the tongue in thy mouth; fast held be thy lips; stopped be thine ears from hearing, and thy eyes from seeing; cursed be thy house, thy kindred, thy cattle; by all the *gods* be thou cursed."

The Colonel had succeeded in committing this to memory by the time he reached the Pass.

And it was well he had done so. For now appeared from behind some bushes the robber who had left the cave to convey to Shigatze the anonymous demand for his "ransom." With this man was another; and the two were watching intently the opening in the Pass, through which must come the bearers of the "ransom."

They did not attempt to molest the Colonel, believing him to be a Yellow Cap priest.

However, the frightened "priest in disguise" determined to forestall any danger by beginning on the mantram in time.

Therefore, in a low threatening voice he started on the awful words.

The robbers had not dreamed of interfering with a priest of this high order; on the contrary they were approaching him, seeking a blessing, as is the custom in that country, even among the bandits.

They listened. Then they paused, while louder grew the terrible invocation; the Colonel trembling with fright himself, even while the words rolled majestically and sonorously from his lips.

The terror-stricken robbers supposed that in some unknown way this priest had discovered one or more, perhaps, of their many depredations.

They begged for mercy, kneeling at his feet. All in vain. The curse being the Colonel's only weapon, he clung to it with desperation.

Seeing that their prayers were useless, the brigands arose. They gazed wildly around for a moment. Then they ran toward their mountain retreat. They flew; the curse now becoming louder, and ringing in their ears, as the Colonel shouted it after them: "Cursed be thy house, thy kindred, thy cattle; sealed be thy lips, thy ears, and thine eyes," he yelled, as they disappeared in the distance.

Then he turned and met the astonished faces of Lieutenant Rolston and Stephen Wyndham, who were approaching him from the Pass, bringing with them his "ransom," to be placed under the large *stone,*

according to the direction of the robbers. This sum of two thousand pounds, they had collected partly among themselves, and partly from the city authorities at Shigatze.

However, following them and remaining concealed in the Pass, was a large force of policemen from Shigatze.

Keeping back and out of sight, they intended, when the Colonel was produced by his captors, after the ransom had been paid, to spring upon the rascal brigands and carry them away as prisoners.

While the Colonel was shouting the "curse" after the retreating robbers, the policemen, with the superstition of their country, stood pale and trembling listening to the awful words.

As for Rolston and Stephen Wyndham, it was not until the quondam priest had removed his robe, and stood arrayed only in his underclothing, and the rosary, together with the high yellow hat, which he had forgotten, that his friends recognized him. Even then they believed that he had suddenly lost his reason, and had become violently insane.

At last they understood his unfortunate predicament.

By the advice of the policemen he once more resumed his priestly garb, that he might make his entrance into Shigatze less conspicuously than in the scant attire left him by the robbers.

All things have an end.

The procession of policemen, with George Rolston

and Stephen Wyndham on horses, and the Colonel in a kango, at last reached the hotel in Shigatze.

Their arrival might have passed without undue notice, and the Colonel have reached the seclusion of his room safely, had it not been that Mrs. Browne was standing on the wide verandah of the hotel.

She was gazing toward the mountain pass from which her husband had so strangely disappeared the morning before.

Pale and distracted she looked, while Irene, Kirza and several Tibetan serving women of the hotel, stood near, endeavoring to comfort her.

When the Colonel caught sight of her woe-begone face, he forgot his unaccustomed dress; oblivious of priestly robe, the high yellow hat, and the rosary, he thought only of comforting his wife.

Rushing to her, he implanted a hearty kiss on her cheek; and tenderly embracing her, he exclaimed, "Well, my dear, here I am safe and sound."

For a moment Mrs. Browne seemed turned to stone; then with a shriek, she ran into the hotel, down the hall and into her room, followed by Kirza and the horrified Tibetan maids.

It was the *voice* of the supposed dead, or kidnapped, that she had heard. But the figure and costume were that of an unwieldy heathen Yellow Cap priest.

When George and Stephen had fully explained the situation to Irene, she told them, she feared Mrs. Browne was so unnerved by what she had been through in the last few hours, that she would be unable to start on the homeward trip in the morning.

But Stephen must go the next day. In the mail which had been awaiting them had come a *sad* summons for him. He could not delay.

But Mrs. Browne now rapidly recovered her equilibrium. By morning she was ready to start on the return journey.

"I tell you, Maria," said Colonel Browne that evening after recounting to his wife his unpleasant experience, "it was that accursed Amulet that was at the bottom of the whole business; and now it is lost again after all."

"I hope," said Mrs. Browne, "that Kozlov will never find it again; or if he *does*, that it will work on *him* next time."

Little did the good lady think that her words were prophetic. Little did she know what was waiting for the Count, not far ahead.

COLONEL AND MRS. BROWNE

"I tell you Maria, it was that accursed amulet."

Chapter XVII.

The Parting at Shigatze

When the party reached the second city of Tibet, their intention was to make only a short stay there, hastening on to Leh, the chief city of Ladak, or Little Tibet, and then to Kashmir. The Brownes of course were leaving them to return to Calcutta. But Stephen with the others intended to go on to Kashmir to one of the English settlements there, in the hills or low mountains overlooking the vale of Kashmir.

These mountain villages or settlements were favorite retreats of the families of English officers, for here they escaped the heat of the lower valleys. Count Kozlov had expressed an intention of purchasing, or perhaps building, a villa for himself somewhere in this region. He thought he might find enough English society here to avoid loneliness, without encountering any old unpleasant acquaintances from his home town in Russia.

George Rolston at his post in Serinagur, the capital of Kashmir, would be able to visit his friend Stephen, also the Kozlovs and the few English residents. So he too, felt as well satisfied with arrangements as it was possible for him to feel, with Mary Hamilton so far away, and probably gone from his life henceforth.

Letters were waiting at Shigatze for all. Colonel Browne was notified that important business required him to be present at Calcutta at an early date. Stephen, alas for his plans, received a letter which had been forwarded from a small mountain station on the borders of India, having been sent from Calcutta a week before. This letter informed him that his more than father, the Archbishop, had been prostrated with an attack of paralysis, and was lingering along, hoping for his immediate return. He must go, there was no alternative, his duty was plain. Therefore he and the Colonel and his wife and a guard of soldiers left the morning after the Colonel's rescue for India. In a brief farewell to Irene, (for he could not see her alone), he said in a low tone, "Do not forget me, I will return at the earliest possible moment, but now my duty is to the Archbishop."

So they parted, and Irene remembered the prediction of the Magician. How would it all end? George Rolston received by mail his orders to proceed to Kashmir.

Count Kozlov also received letters. One of them, a legal-appearing document, caused a sudden pallor to overspread his face, as he perused it. Only his daughter and George Rolston noticed this. Irene trembled with foreboding. Lieutenant Rolston thought "that man is not far from the clutch of the law," and his surmise was correct. Still the document had been forwarded from Russia, by a friend. No enemy could possibly know his present location. Yet the law reaches far and wide. Its detectives hide in every

city. Danger lurks for the criminal around every corner. At every turn in the road justice may seize him.

The party camped, the first night after their friends' departure, eight miles from Shigatze near another celebrated monastery, that of Sakya, which their new guides urged them to visit. Their camping places now consisted of small enclosed spaces where tents might be put up. One large tent, also served as a dining room. The tents were erected over wooden floors and around low broad walls, and were comfortable, and the journey was easier from here on.

While they were seated at supper the first night, Kirza, the Hindoo woman, called the interpreter to the door. There he found a wild-looking Tibetan boy, a mere lad, who trembled and bowed low. From his back he threw down a pack containing the stolen goods. Then from within his poor meager garment he took a package. "It is the curse," he said. "I return it to the foreigner; my father took it from the party at Shigatze Pass. When he took it, he was well, but a sudden disease attacked him when he reached home. Now he is dead. And that is not all. My mother took the curse and hid it. In the night she was bitten by a deadly serpent; she too, is dead. I found it, and I hastened with it here. Let its work go no further. My sister and I have harmed no one. May we not escape?" So saying, he glided away into the night.

The interpreter took everything to the Count. Kozlov undid the many wrappings around the curse.

There within its case, was the Amulet serpent necklace. He held up the jeweled thing to the light of the Chinese lanterns over the supper table. The beautiful stones were all there, not one was missing. The delicately linked scales glistened like silver. The rubies glowed, the opals flashed, and turned from pale rose, to blue and white. In the opal head of the serpent the emerald eyes shimmered a pale translucent lovely green.

The Count collected his treasures and retired to his tent. There he sat for a long time with the Amulet in his hand, buried in deep thought. He was considering an evil scheme. How strange that so lovely a thing could possess the power to work such evil. His enemies might be vanquished by means of it, when once he understood the secret. But neither he, nor Irene would dare wear it. "Irene!" the thought again flashed into his brain, the thought he had entertained before.

As he sat there scheming, planning, putting into working shape his designs, the gems in his hands suddenly began to change color. The opal head became an inky blue, the emerald eyes grew black and piercing like a basilisk's. The opals became dark, the rubies changed to a sullen lurid red. The Amulet trembled and quivered, and seemed to writhe like a live venomous thing. The Count felt an electric shock pass through him. He looked upon the changed gems. He turned pale. A strange foreboding, a dreadful fear, shook him. He replaced the Amulet in the case.

The Parting at Shigatze

The remaining members of the party had intended to make a long journey the first day, but had been induced instead to visit the Sakya monastery, near which they had camped.

Early the next morning they hastened to see the famous convent. Its golden roofs covered a palatial structure. It consisted of a great temple surrounded by white dormitories. Smaller temples rose in the vicinity, which were painted red. The Lama Superior of this convent ranks second only to the Grand Lama of Lassa. In case of the death of the latter, the Lama Superior of Sakya becomes Regent, until the incarnation of another Grand Lama, which always takes place soon after the death of the preceding.

From several children born about this time, one is chosen for the new Grand Lama, by casting lots or by occult assistance. Around this monastery, rose high stone walls. They were very high, and very thick, and, like the rest of the structure, were painted white. Over the walls rose a castle-like building from which floated the standard banner of Buddhism. On a tower shone resplendent the circular plate of gold; probably to represent the Buddha as the Sun—the great light of the East. The entire spectacle was impressive. The interior of the Temple was dim, but light penetrated from a courtyard surrounding it. On each side of the great hall were statues twenty-five feet high, one painted red and one blue. These statues of the Buddha were similar to those seen at the gates of Japanese Temples.

Beautiful pictures of deities and saints hung on the

walls. The higher priests live in some of the temple buildings. An inner courtyard is the gathering place of the lesser priests to read the Buddhist scriptures. There is an entrance at each end of the Hall, one for priests and one for visitors. Inside the Hall is a vast expanse of golden walls, and golden ceiling. The pillars, even, are covered with gold brocade. Several hundred images are covered with fine gold leaf. In the center of the room stands a statue of the Buddha thirty-five feet high. It is covered with fine gold, underneath which is a foundation of mud.

In front of the statue is a table for offerings. On this are candle-sticks and trays of fine gold. In a small alcove adjoining the main hall is a statue made entirely of precious gems. It is the statue of one of the founders of Lamaism. The floor and walls of this small room were composed of gems whose glittering beauty could not be described.

In another very long and high room, was an immense collection of valuable manuscripts, ancient Buddhist documents, with gold letters on dark blue paper. These scriptures were, many of them brought from India, by the founder of the Temple, and those who succeeded him. The Tibetan manuscripts were written instead of printed. There was a noted book of Prophecy brought from China to this Monastery convent. In this book was to be seen a most terrifying prediction, as follows: "As wickedness increases and obtains possession of the earth, a great flood of water will be sent upon it, and every living creature

destroyed. Fatal calamities, such as a great war, and a great famine, will precede this flood."

This book is supposed to have been sent from Heaven, or its words delivered by an inspired teacher, and any one who doubts the prediction will be punished by instant death. This is the Tibetan belief, and so firmly do they trust it, that copies are circulated throughout the country. Outside of this great main temple, are dormitories for five hundred priests belonging to the Order. This is also a grand residence for the "Spiritual Superior" presiding over the Monastery, who is of a saintly appearance.

In a grove of willow trees arose the palatial residence of the greatest dignitary, the Abbot, or real Head of the Temple. He is called by words which translated mean, "the highest treasures of the monastery." These words are used only in addressing this Abbot and the Chinese Emperor.

In passing from the Temple the party met in the courtyard several priests who seemed friendly in manner. With one of these Count Kozlov entered into conversation, asking if he knew of the White Mahatma of Leh.

"All the priests of Tibet know of him," replied the Monk. "He is the greatest Adept of Tibet. He is very old in spirit, that is, old in the number of his incarnations. It is not known how many hundreds of years he has lived, how many times he has returned to this earth. But his wisdom surpasses any one in Asia; or that of any one in the world."

"You surprise me," returned the Count. "It seems unheard of."

"There are many things, brother," said the monk, "which are unheard of, totally unknown by the laymen, by the European, by those of any country who have not given up all else for the pursuit of wisdom. But these great teachers, these Adepts *are* living, a few of them, here and there throughout the world. Unknown by the busy world, unheeded by the narrow mind, the unbeliever, the scoffer. Yet occasionally an advanced soul recognizes them by the glance of their mysterious eyes, by a word of wisdom spoken in warning or advice. They do not die in the sense that we do. Their souls sometimes enter the body of a departing spirit. While the body *seems* to die, it is revived, though controlled afterwards by a different personality; or it may enter the body of a newborn child; for they remain here as teachers of mankind. Such a one may live on, in this way for hundreds of years, to help in the great work of uplifting the world."

"But how is this done? I can not understand it," said Kozlov.

"We are not permitted to reveal these things to the layman," said the priest. "Only through many lives of spirituality, and then only for a wise and benevolent purpose; only through occult wisdom may this knowledge be obtained, may these things be done."

Kozlov would have been glad to talk further, but the priest ended the conversation, and proceeded on his way.

The Parting at Shigatze

The Count now was more anxious than ever to meet the White Mahatma, the Wise Man of Leh.

Chapter XVIII.

The Great Mahatma of Ladak

The next morning after the visit to Sakya Convent, found the travelers again on the highway. Several days passed by easy stages until they left Greater Tibet behind, and had entered Ladak, or Lesser Tibet.

The latter was once a part of Great Tibet; but frequent invasions by nations from the north who traversed this country in attempting to conquer Kashmir, and the many wars of which it was the scene, reduced the land to misery and resulted in separating it from the political rule of Lassa.

The country was handed on from one conqueror to another. The Mohammedans first converted the inhabitants of Little Tibet to Islamism and finally the political existence of Ladak ended. When it was annexed to Kashmir by the Sikhs, the people were allowed to practice their former religion, and two-thirds of them rebuilt their Gompas and returned to their former life. The other third remained a combination of Sikh-Mussulman. But they are only faintly tinged with Islamism now, and the Buddhist Lamas still hope to bring them back to the faith of their ancestors.

Politically now the Ladak or Lesser Tibet is under

the authority of the Maharaja of Kashmir, who appoints its governor. But in regard to religious matters, the majority of the people still look to Lassa in Tibet, and the Grand Lama there.

Their priests or higher Lamas, are appointed at Lassa. The two peoples are chiefly Mongolians. They are divided, however, into two classes—the Ladakians and the Tchampas. Along the narrow valleys they build their neat two-story houses, and cultivate their small patches of land. They lead a sedentary life. They are not good-looking. Their heads are shaven except for a slender braid of hair. They have narrow receding foreheads, the bright dark eyes of the Mongolian, a flat nose, a large mouth and thin lips. They have a short chin with a scanty beard, and hollow cheeks. They are also small of stature.

The Tchampas or Nomads who compose the rest of the population, are of a poorer and coarser type, and are chiefly hunters.

Leh, the capital of Ladak, is a small town of but 5000 inhabitants. It has three principal streets, bordered with neat white houses. There is a great market square or bazaar, where the merchants of India, China, Turkestan, Kashmir and Tibet, come to exchange their products for Tibetan gold. This gold is brought by the natives for the purchase of cloth garments for their Monks, as well as for many necessary articles for themselves.

On one of the hills above the town stands an ancient deserted palace. In the very center of the town

is a vast two-story building, which is the residence of the Governor of Ladak, or the Surajbal Vizier, as he is called. He is a most intelligent ruler as well as a great scholar.

On the morning after the party reached Leh, Count Kozlov was attacked by a form of malaria which confined him to his room for several days. Their stay here must be short, for Lieutenant Rolston and his soldiers must go on to their destination.

To his disappointment, the Count was obliged to send his daughter to the Monastery of Leh, instead of going himself, as he was determined to find out the secret of the working of the Amulet. Therefore, Irene started in the morning of the second day after their arrival in Leh. She was accompanied by Kirza the maid, also by Lieutenant Rolston and one of the soldiers.

The Monastery, or the Convent as it is oftener called, for both names are used, stands on the summit of a high rock rising in the middle of a valley through which flows the Indus River.

They passed innumerable shrines enclosing statues of the Buddha, countless prayer wheels, and floating prayer banners. At last ahead of them rose the tower battlements of the Convent. An immense door or gate of wood admitted them to the courtyard, where Rolston and the soldier seated themselves to wait, while Irene and Kirza passed on to the interview with the Great Mahatma.

An immense prayer wheel stood on the wide veranda of the Temple; around this were gathered a circle

of priests, while below the porch was a band of musicians. From the prayer wheel and band stand floated red ribbons covered with prayer inscriptions.

As Irene hesitated, not knowing which way to go, a priest came forward, and in very good English enquired whom she wished to see. When she told him, he called an attendant or porter, to take her to the audience chamber. "There you will have to wait for half an hour," said he. "The hour of his reception of visitors is twelve, but you are the first, and will not be long delayed. Send this paper in by the porter first." A row of paper strips were suspended over the door of the Temple. He took down one of these and wrote a few words upon it, then handed it to Irene. The porter took her through a side door of the veranda into a large assembly, or audience room. Here he gave them seats, and said, "Your servant must remain here when you pass into the Inner Sanctum."

"Then the Great Mahatma does not come into the audience room to receive visitors," said Irene.

"No," replied the porter, in his mixed dialect. "The Great White Mahatma never receives in this room except on great occasions. Then, the people must remain twenty feet from him."

The room was about sixty feet long, so that no very large audience could be seated under this restriction. "The Mahatma is a very holy man," added the porter, "the people must not come too near."

In a few moments a Temple bell was heard through the open window. It struck twelve musical notes,

and then a white velvet curtain hanging over the entrance of the Inner Sanctum began to wave, and was drawn partly aside, by an invisible hand.

The porter took the written strip of paper from Irene. He approached the door which had been opened behind the white velvet curtain. He prostrated himself before the slightly open space. Then arising, he entered with the paper. Almost immediately he returned and escorted Irene to the door. "Bow very low, once only," said he. In great trepidation Irene endeavored to carry out these instructions. Therefore until she resumed her standing position she did not fully take in the wonderful figure seated in a large white painted chair. This figure motioned her to a seat upon a low white bench, about twenty feet away from it. Even then Irene felt that she had ventured too near such a presence, and sat on consecrated ground.

Words failed her afterwards in describing this greatest Adept, the most progressed soul in the world at present. She recognized *why* he was called the White Mahatma. Everything in the room was white, walls, ceiling, hangings, and a marble floor of white. But the personage himself: a stately, superior bearing characterized the form seated in the white chair. White priestly robes garbed it from head to feet.

Silvery white flowing locks fell around a face of marble pallor. And yet the face and form were not old. That face was like the light of a powerful electric bulb shining through a vase of alabaster. The

pure spirit reflected its lustre, through, and upon, the ennobled flesh.

The Magician of Lassa had shown progress far out-distancing the ordinary man. But the Mahatma was a soul advanced many incarnations beyond that great occultist. From his pale spiritual, almost angelic face, looked forth the eyes which had known life in all its stages. Dark and luminous, softly sympathetic, yet of keen discernment, they had wept and smiled in long past lives, over sorrows and joys, now remembered as a dream. And yet, not forgotten; for they held pity, encouragement and faith, and a heavenly spiritual vision for those who were still struggling, suffering, enjoying brief snatches of happiness mixed with sorrow, along the weary road, which all souls must travel on their journey toward immortality.

A deep peace of soul seemed now to fall upon Irene, as the Mahatma gazed upon her. A calmness, a stillness softly fell around *her,* too, like a mist of white cloud. The every-day outside world seemed far removed from this room.

The Mahatma spoke; and his tones vibrated like the musical echoes of a silver wand, as it strikes a crystal goblet filled with water.

"Daughter of Babylon, the night is gone, the morning dawns."

With an inspirational flash Irene remembered her experience at the House of the Magician. In that journey of the spirit backward through the centuries she had seen this face beside the Euphrates. But it

had become more purified. It had lived more lives in those long centuries, gaining spirituality in each one. This great soul had returned to earth as a Helper of the Race.

"You came," continued the Mahatma, "to ask me for the secret of the Amulet which was sent from Egypt to the great King of Babylon, Hamuraibai; the Amulet which descended from him through a long line of Kings until it reached Nebuchadrezzar, who gave it to his daughter, the Princess Hamurai. The princess, and Cyrus, her lover, one of the King's guard, threw themselves into the Euphrates, to seek oblivion until the dawning of a life when they might be united. That day has come, a new life is here; and with it, the souls of Princess Hamurai and Cyrus live again in new personalities. Dost thou remember that old life?"

Irene was spell-bound, she could hardly speak, but at last she said, "I saw it in a vision, and then I remembered."

"And you *will* remember, life after life, as you progress spiritually," replied the Mahatma. Then he rose; he seemed to glide, rather than to walk, to the side of the room. Here Irene noticed for the first time, row upon row of shelves which lined both sides of the walls. Upon them were parchments yellow with age. Old manuscripts which might have been saved, when Atlantis sank beneath the waves. From a remote corner he took a very small thin roll of papyrus. Yet, when unrolled, it was quite a long

strip, so thin of texture that it could be thus compactly folded.

"This has been awaiting you," said he, "for many years, as the world names time. To you shall the secret of the Amulet now be revealed." He unrolled it as he spoke, and Irene saw that the papyrus was covered with strange hieroglyphics. The Mahatma translated them in his musical silvery tones, as follows:

"From Egypt's mystic land, I come,
To Babylon's great King, Hamuraibai;
I am the curse, the wicked dread;
But work no ill, when self is dead."

Then followed a long line of signatures, the names or marks of each King who had inherited it in succession.

"Hamuraibai."

"Nebuchadrezzar	I.
Ashurnagirphal	III.
Shalmanezer	II.
Tiglath-pileser	IV.
Shalmanezer	IV.
Sargon	II.
Sennacherib	
Esarhaddon	
Asharbanipal	
Nabopolassar	
Nebuchadrezzar	II."

Hamurai, Daughter of Nebuchadrezzar.
Cyrus, Officer of the King's Guards.

How strangely familiar to Irene looked the names in the lower corner of the papyrus. Could it be possible that Stephen and she, in that long-past life, had written those characters which still lived in immortal youth upon this old yellow parchment?

"This papyrus," said the Mahatma, as he rolled it up, "should be laid in the opal head of the serpent necklace. A secret spring will open the cavity."

Irene drew from within her dress, the Amulet necklace, and laid it on a table near the Mahatma. He leaned forward from the white chair, and lifted up the chain. She gazed fascinated. Suddenly it had become a transcendently beautiful thing. The opals shone, a pale cerulean blue, mingled with rose, a kind of opaline fire. The silver links were tremulous with a vibrant life. The emerald eyes were of a pale, translucent green, a mild placid gleam was in their depths. Never before had the necklace appeared so beautiful.

THE GREAT MAHATMA OR WISE MAN OF LEH

Chapter XIX.

The Secret of the Amulet

"Daughter," said the Mahatma, "the secret of the Amulet is this: 'Kill out self and live for others.' Then, no curse, no harm, will fall upon its possessor. The laying aside of the body, when that time comes, but removes the unselfish spirit to an interval of rest and bliss. But the curse will follow the selfish, even to the intermediate world, where the fires of conscience will make them suffer all that they have caused of suffering here. By the reflection of the gems may be known the soul's progress, the advancement it has made in the journey toward immortality.

"In the lowest form of life, even in the mineral, there is some degree of spirit. The soul of the stones is reflected in their color. Their changes show the real though hidden nature of the wearer or the owner. They grow dim or bright, lustreless or brilliant, as they are touched by the evil or by the good. By their changes of color you may know whether a person's motives are wrong or right. But let me explain the effect of noble, unselfish thought upon the spirit, and how this is reflected from the physical body, and how this may be instantly seen by those advanced masters who have developed the sixth, or astral sense. Have

you heard, my child, that each being reflects from his body an 'Aura,' or an ethereal, astral, vaporous substance, which is the composition and projection of the astral body within?" .

"I have heard something of this," said Irene.

"Well it is so; but the real spirit is innermost of all, shining through the astral, and from thence through the physical, as the electricity within the bulb shines through first the glass bulb, and next through a vase of fine china or alabaster, in which the bulb may be placed.

"The good man, the evil, the noble, the brutal, the intellectual, the dull, the philanthropist, the miser, each may be known to one who has developed the sixth sense, by the reflection from his astral body, which is the exact counterpart of the spiritual body, and the shape of the physical, also. Each bears always with him, his real inner nature. Though his outer behavior and words may deceive the ordinary man, yet the clairvoyant adept reads the truth instantly by his astral light.

"The physical body, which sheathes the astral, will in time be cast off as man progresses. And in time also will the astral body, which sheathes the spiritual, be cast aside. Then will remain the real body, the spiritual or causal. When your astral sight is developed, you may then understand your friend, your neighbor at a glance. The Aura which radiates around him, like a halo, extends around his whole body in the form of an ovoid.

"If his thoughts are continually good, unselfish and

noble, his Aura will reflect the colors which represent these traits of character. If evil, selfish, low thoughts predominate continually, his Aura will show such shades of color. The ethereal blue, or the murky indigo, show the spiritual or the non-spiritual nature. The pale yellow shows the higher mental qualities.

"The beautiful rose indicates the purest affection. The lurid red shows the lowest nature. The green, the violet, each color, has its meaning. The Ego develops the purer, most beautiful shades in its unfoldment towards divinity.

"The soul which has become superman, has an Aura which surrounds his body to a great distance and shines with a splendor beyond imagination in its loveliness. You, my daughter, have *advanced,* since those days of Babylon; you and your lover also. Selfishness and pride, ambition and love of power and gold, no longer rule your spirit or his. Continue to make the higher nobler qualities your aim, till you have reached the goal."

"How shall I know," asked Irene, "what is right, what is duty, when all seems dark?"

"When the pupil is ready," replied the Mahatma, "the master, the teacher appears. Perform the duty which comes first, and to those nearest you, be it small or great. As each task or obligation arises, do your best, and you shall be led; the way will open, a light will appear, dim at first perhaps, then growing brighter until the perfect day."

The Mahatma gazed intently at Irene with a look which seemed to read the innermost soul. He was

reading by his astral sight, the Aura of her spirit. He saw it reflected all around her, encircling her as an ovoid cloud.

He saw one, developed beyond many of the race, one whose affections were set on higher objects than vain earthly pleasures and ambitions. Yet she performed with unselfish faithfulness, every duty. The nobler qualities dwelling within her, reflected now in a mist of lovely colors, which typified the higher forms of love, devotion and sympathy. They were enhanced by an intellect refined and spiritualized by aspirations reaching ever toward the divine. These colors were the roseate and blue of the highest purest love, the lilac blue which showed spirit progress, the pale increasing yellow of intellectuality.

And the Great Mahatma himself; what might be the Aura of one so great as he? An Adept, a Master, a Teacher of the Race.

As she arose to depart, suddenly Irene Kozlov's eyes were opened. For one brief moment, the clairvoyant or astral vision descended upon her. She saw before her, humanity in its noblest form; she saw one who had reached a great height far beyond that of man; one who had become superman. One who had conquered self through many, many lives stood now before her, a soul which had become almost a perfect channel for the manifestation of the light and power of the Logos.

All the colors of the rainbow and others beyond the powers of the spectrum to show, other and yet unknown colors of the spiritual world, were playing

around him in a luminous iridescent Aura, which radiated far beyond his physical form, ethereal though the latter seemed.

This Aura was composed of matter inconceivably fine, which pulsated with a living fire. It was filled with changing radiant hues of brilliant splendor, and concentric waves of opalescent lines floated and shimmered around him like sunset reflected on Mother of Pearl.

The moment passed, and Irene said farewell, taking with her the papyrus.

"Go on, daughter, to Kashmir; there lies your work," were the Mahatma's last words as she left the white room and rejoined Kirza in the audience hall. These words spoken by so great an authority, were enough.

She had felt that she was nearing her field, upon leaving Lassa. She knew it now. Her mind was settled. The Mahatma had seen further than Irene knew. His astral sight penetrated a room of the Inn at Leh, where Count Kozlov awaited his daughter's return. That wonderful vision beheld a dark haze surrounding the Count, an Aura of dull murky red; the lurid glow of hatred which lit up the black clouds of malice. He saw the brownish green shades of deceit and treachery, the red and green waves of avarice. And he saw further, even as the Magician had seen, the end of Kozlov's life.

Irene had learned the working of the secret spring of the Amulet, and she explained it to her father, and gave him the translation of the Egyptian papyrus.

He was disappointed, she felt it. He had expected some diabolical machination, some trick, some rule he might apply in his dealing with others, but the effect of which he might escape himself. And still the Amulet was evil for him and for his kind. It would not injure Irene, he knew that now. He would have to see to that business himself.

In the meantime he would be careful. He would not carry it upon his own person. He would pack it again in his own baggage, or even let his daughter wear it. As she was safe from its influence, it did not matter. Even if she were *not,* it did not matter either.

The third day after their arrival in Leh, Kozlov had recovered so far, that they could proceed on their way to Kashmir. He had reasons for wishing to hasten now, for he expected to receive news there from Russia. The trip from now on would be a hazardous one. They would be obliged to travel over mountain passes, and through gorges which were cut between the rocky walls.

They must go by thickets where wild animals abounded. The proprietor of the Inn had warned them to take with them coolie guides who knew the way, and were accustomed to the dangers. As the roads were narrow and precipitous, around the mountains, they hired several of these trained leaders, and took several extra horses. Count Kozlov was planning a home retreat in Kashmir, where no enemy could reach him, And for once Irene looked forward with pleasant anticipations.

Lieutenant Rolston was not an admirer of the Count, but he sympathized with the daughter. For Stephen's sake he would look after her, as well as for her own, for he feared danger for her. Kirza too, had become attached to the lonely, reserved girl. Like George Rolston, she mistrusted the Count.

Quietly, but constantly, she watched day and night, dreading she knew not what. She remembered Stephen's words that night in the Himalayas, "that he looked to her to protect Irene when he was gone." Instinctively she recognized that Lieutenant Rolston was also watchful. She never relaxed her vigilance except when he was near.

And so the last stage of the journey was reached. Kashmir, the land which Irene had read of, and had invested with a romantic interest, was drawing near. She had read of the oppressions of the once happy people of the Vale, and the lethargy, indolence and indifferent despair which had fallen upon them, and which she hoped to be able to change in some small degree.

Kozlov now became very nervous. He insisted that his daughter should ride directly in front of him in the procession of mounted horses. Seeing this, George Rolston arranged that he and Kirza should ride near her, all the time. This plan seemed to annoy the Count greatly, but George was persistent. Then as they approached the camping stations at night, Kozlov insisted on sending a coolie ahead, to see if any other traveler might have preceded them. For some reason he seemed to dislike meeting strangers.

The Amulet

Kozlov had reason to fear trouble. His affairs were approaching a crisis. Not only was the shadow of retribution upon his track, for certain crimes committed in Russia, but there was an accounting to be made, in a little more than a year, for the large fortune that he had squandered. In that time Irene would reach the age of twenty-five; then he must settle matters. The fortune must be handed over to her, or be accounted for.

He knew he could not retrieve his losses. But an unusual feeling haunted him of late. Though he disclaimed any tendency to superstition, yet he felt a strange psychic premonition of impending personal danger and disaster. Day by day it grew stronger. He could not shake it off. Perhaps the growing determination, in some way to remove his stepdaughter from his path may have been partly responsible for this gloomy foreboding; any way, he felt that he must take some desperate measure soon.

Chapter XX.

Tiger Gorge

The journey was now drawing to its end. Each night the party rested at small bungalow stations which were scattered at intervals along the way. These stations had been placed there for the accommodation of English officers and their families, and other tourists also, who spent the hot summer months in the cool mountain retreats. Comfortable hotels and villas were to be found in all the little mountain villages. The bungalow stations were rudely built. They consisted of a roof, four walls and a floor. Within were wooden cots along the sides, which were covered with tiger skins and formed comfortable beds. There was a long wooden table and a few chairs and benches. Also a few dishes were in a cupboard, and several cooking utensils hung on hooks beneath it.

A large fireplace was filled with fuel from the adjacent forests. Altogether, these simple rough shelters seemed luxury to the tired travelers who rested there for the night. There was always a long low main room and a side room. The soldiers and officers, however, still camped outside in their tents.

They had reinforced the party by a dozen armed

coolies and guides. Though this was a route where the chief danger lay in attacks from the jungle beasts, only the coolies appeared to have any fear. *They* were constantly on the watch. As the days grew warmer, they traveled partly by night. This increased the danger, though they carried torches.

As they came within twenty-four hours of Kashmir they began to feel safer. The last night before reaching the outlying village of Sindh, where they intended to remain, they stayed at the station bungalow until late in the afternoon. When it was growing cooler, they started on the last stage of their journey, intending to make the little town in the Vale of Kashmir by daylight, and rest there.

About sunset they were winding along a narrow defile on one side of which was a high ledge of rocks, and on the other a precipitous bluff, which fell abruptly hundreds of feet to the rocky bed of a shallow stream far below. The road was narrow. A single misstep and the traveler might easily plunge to his death. The long procession of coolies and guides were mostly ahead of the tourists. They were followed first, by Lieutenant Rolston, then by the Hindoo, Kirza, then by Irene Kozlov, and last by the Count. A few coolies brought up the rear of the baggage-laden ponies which followed after the Count.

As they approached the narrowest part of the road, Kozlov dismounted and led his horse, walking closely behind his daughter as if to protect her in case of danger. Suddenly he stepped slightly aside toward the high ledge on the inner side of the road, allow-

ing his horse to follow closely the pony ridden by Irene. He glanced backwards and then ahead.

The baggage and coolies had fallen behind around a sharp curve, and were out of sight. In front of him all were intently watching the footsteps of their horses. Like a flash he struck his horse a sudden blow. It sprang ahead, and in doing so, it crowded his daughter's pony from the path, close to the crumbling edge of the precipice.

At that very instant the Hindoo woman and Lieutenant Rolston both turned. They saw the maneuver. Kirza was continually watching her mistress and often looked behind. But to George Rolston it seemed that a voice suddenly spoke, an inner voice, a spiritual prompting, which he followed instinctively. "Turn! Watch the Count!" it said. He obeyed. He saw and understood instantly Kozlov's design. And he saw that Kirza understood it also.

As Irene's pony touched the edge of the cliff, the earth gave way and it began to slip. Its hind feet went down, but with a wild scramble it clung for a moment to the bushy edge. In that moment the woman Kirza leaped from her horse. As Irene felt the pony slipping, she sprang toward the road, but not soon enough to reach it. She, too, grasped frantically at the bushes on the edge of the precipice, grasped and held on for a brief moment, while the unfortunate animal crashed down the steep descent. It fell down, down, and at last struck with a dull thud, and an almost human groan, on the sharp rocks beneath.

In that brief moment Kirza was beside her mistress, and grasped her arms. With superhuman strength she held the girl until, in another moment, George Rolston was beside her. He and Kirza slowly dragged the girl upwards. By this time a guide and several coolies, coming around the turn of the road, had seen, and were with them lending their efforts also. Together they drew Irene from her perilous position, while the Count, to all appearances, overcome with terror, sank to the path on its inner, safer side.

Irene was trembling and white, but did not faint. Kirza seated her on the ground and bent over her, uttering words of affection, in the Hindoo language, casting strange glances meanwhile at the Count, whom no one seemed to notice. Irene did not know, and she was never told, what made her pony spring aside as it did. After awhile, seeing that the poor animal lay motionless far below, they placed Irene on Lieutenant Rolston's horse, while he walked behind it. He had advised the Count to fall back to the rear of the line of coolies, which now was waiting on the road. This he was only too glad to do.

Rolston would not permit Kozlov, or the coolies, within ten feet of himself and Irene. Kirza was now muttering to herself, while wrathful gleams flashed from her eyes. In her own language, which Irene did not understand, she spoke to George Rolston: "Master, you saw?"

"I saw, Kirza; I understood," replied Rolston, and that was all that was spoken between them. But they

two alone, knew that Kozlov had tried to put his daughter out of his way. He had sought to cause her death, and a terrible one at that. Rumor had supplied George with the cause. The shrewd Hindoo woman had discerned it, too. But what could either of them do? And how could they tell the unsuspecting girl? On the other hand, how dare they leave her to meet other such attempts unwarned? For Kozlov believed his diabolical effort had not been seen. It was a terrible situation.

The moon had now risen. They perceived that they were entering a thick jungle, through which ran a narrow gorge. It was not as deep as some they had already passed. The road widened and then ran inward toward the forest for a long distance before coming out into a plain beyond.

The guides told them that this was called "Tiger Gorge," because it was inhabited by the terrible man-eating beast. Many dreadful accidents had occurred here, they said, and many hair-breadth escapes.

The guides now, as a precaution, scattered through the procession. One rode ahead, one went to the center, and one went to the rear. Kozlov had gone to the front when the road widened, but he seemed restless.

The coolies began to lose control of themselves. They showed abject fear. But Kashmir was not far away. In another hour they would be at the station house overlooking the vale. A mile or two beyond the road leading from the bungalow station down into the village, was a large hotel. This was situated high

up on the "bluff" as it was called, and commanded a beautiful view of the Vale of Kashmir.

This hotel, however, was some distance off the main traveled road, and so they were to stop until sunrise at the little bungalow station. Then they would rent cottages in the Vale itself. European officers and their families chiefly occupied the hotel. Count Kozlov had his own reasons for not wishing to go there. Rolston would camp with his soldiers in the Vale below.

The moon now entirely disappeared, but they had the torches which they were using to frighten away the wild animals. The torches flashed to and fro, on both sides of the road, and lighted the bushes for a short distance on either side. The moon remained obscured for some time, behind the clouds.

At this moment Count Kozlov, either from uneasiness or because he felt that he would be safer, in the middle of the line, made a slight detour. He turned his horse to one side of the jungle path and rode back to the center.

Before his attempt on his step-daughter's life he had removed the Amulet from the baggage on his horse and placed it within his coat. He had done this, fearing that his own horse might follow Irene's down the precipice, and the valuable treasure be lost. He had forgotten, *now,* that he had the weird evil necklace upon his person. He had forgotten also how thickly the jungle bushes grew beside the path. He rode almost into them, as he turned his horse back toward the center of the line.

A moment later there was heard a leaping and crashing in the bushes. This was instantly followed by awful blood-curdling shrieks, and then by a heavy fall. There followed a sweeping, dragging sound among the bushes, and the dying away of low groans. Then all was still.

The terrified coolies had stopped, and were shivering in their tracks.

At that moment the moon shot out from behind the clouds, and lighted the surrounding jungle. Behind a clump of bushes, near the center of the procession, could be seen the dark form of an immense tiger, with gleaming eyes. It was crouching over its victim, who lay motionless beneath.

With one leap it had dragged the Count from his horse as he rode past the bush where it was concealed, and had borne him to the ground within the shrubbery.

As the moon flashed upon the dreadful scene, one of the guides and Lieutenant Rolston fired. With a snarl the tiger sprang back into the forest, carrying with him an arm torn from his victim. He was gone, but the Count was dead.

Hurriedly the soldiers rushed to him, and threw a blanket over what was so short a time ago, a man. George Rolston and Kirza sprang toward Irene; for she was sinking slowly to the ground. She had fainted, for she had caught the words of those nearest her, "It is Kozlov."

They placed the unconscious girl in a blanket and the coolies and guides bore her the short distance out

of the forest jungle, to the plain which led soon to the little bungalow station.

Kirza followed them close behind. But George Rolston with several of the soldiers and coolies went back and hastily buried all that was left of Count Kozlov. His coat lay beside the road. From his pockets had fallen papers and business documents, with foreign stamps and seals. Beside them lay the Amulet. Its diamond and ruby body had turned a lurid red. Its opal head had become an inky blue. The emerald eyes glittered malevolently. Never before had it looked so awful. It seemed to the beholders like an avenging demon.

No one dared to touch it. None except Rolston. He picked it up and restored it to its case. Then he gathered up the papers and carefully put all in his pocket.

After this he followed the others to the station. They laid Irene tenderly upon a skin-covered couch in the corner of the room. At once the guides went down into the village for a physician. Faint lights were gleaming here and there, though it was long past midnight. For there were several cases of illness in the valley, and the doctor from Serinagur was there, as the place had no medical attendant of its own. Irene lay as one dead, when within an hour the doctor arrived with a nurse, a beautiful but melancholy-looking Kashmirian young woman of about Irene's age. She was skillful and helpful in each movement. The doctor, too, was a learned man, a native, who had been educated in India.

In the extra cabriolet which they had brought, they placed Irene, and Kirza sat beside her. The nurse rode in the doctor's vehicle, and Lieutenant Rolston and the soldiers rode on horseback behind. The first faint light of morning revealed to them the beautiful, romantic little village buried in lilac bushes, and all kinds of fragrant flowers. White, one and two-story cottages appeared scattered over the green fields, and beside a beautiful crystal stream.

But they stopped at one of the first houses. This was a long, low, white, one-story building with two ells, forming a kind of court in the rear. It was built near the glistening river, and roses and lilacs climbed all around its arched door and small-paned windows. A very modest, unpretentious building, and yet a roomy one. For this was the home of the nurse, as well as a private sanatorium which the doctor kept filled with patients from the small villages throughout the valley. For Miriam, the Kashmirian girl nurse, was a protege of his, and she was known and beloved as far as Serinagur the capital of Kashmir.

Her story was pathetic. Some months before this, her lover had been killed while hunting in this same jungle, by an accidental discharge of his own gun. They brought him back to the little village, to the home of the Kashmirian girl whom he was to marry. For a while it seemed that the great shock had removed her reason from its throne. Yet Miriam recovered and took up the work of nursing, devoting her life wholly to others, thinking no more of self.

Still after the shadowy wild look faded from her face and her manner became calm and serene, she seemed a changed being. A melancholy shade settled on her face in spite of her sweet kind smile. Never again was she heard to laugh, as of old with the young people, when they walked beside the river at evening. Never again did she wander with the band of singing girls who, decorated with garlands of flowers, went from house to house in the moonlight serenading with voice and oriental lute.

When other young men began to seek her, in the course of time, she smiled sweetly and sadly upon them, and said, "Miriam's lover is in Heaven."

Into no better hands could Irene have fallen. Miriam, with the faithful Kirza, and the doctor, fought for days, and even weeks with death. For this last shock to Irene following so soon upon the other, (her own narrow escape from death) had proved too much.

Lieutenant Rolston felt that all was being done that could be, as he talked with the physician several days later. As he was crossing the wide hall of the low white building, the beautiful melancholy nurse Miriam met him and with her strange sad smile pointed to the veranda from which she had just come. "Two strangers would speak with you, sir," she said, and then vanished like a shadow, for she never talked long.

George looked after her as she disappeared. What quality was it, beyond her melancholy Kashmirian beauty, which so fascinated and drew every one? It

must be her *soul attributes* of tenderness, sympathy and love. But there was an aloofness, an impression as of one whose interests are no longer wholly upon earth. There was a self-forgetfulness, as though no ties of earth, no hopes or illusions anchored her here. *She* remained; but with wings poised for flight, when the call should come. There was a look in those beautiful eyes, as of one not quite conscious of her surroundings; as if the soul's reason had been ever so slightly, but still perceptibly jarred from its throne.

Lieutenant Rolston turned away and went outside. The waiting strangers were not Kashmirians, nor citizens of India, but they were Russians. They introduced themselves as such, and enquired for Count Kozlov.

Rolston repeated to them the awful tale. They looked at each other; then one said: "We are officers of the Russian Government sent here to locate and arrest Count Kozlov, in the name of the law."

"But he has paid the penalty of his deeds, and the law must be satisfied."

Chapter XXI.

The Archbishop's Will

When Stephen left the company at Shigatze, he, with the Brownes returned to Calcutta as rapidly as possible. At the door of the Archbishop's residence he was met by Mary Hamilton. She was pale and troubled in looks, and appeared embarrassed in manner. "Uncle is sinking, Stephen," she said, "but he has tried to live until you should come, for he has something to say to you."

She hesitated a moment, then went on, "Oh, Stephen, I have begged of him not to ask of you what I fear he intends to ask, and not to make the conditions regarding his property which he is determined to make. I can not tell you more, but he will explain all.

"Stephen, we both love Uncle as a father, yet do not let him force you into anything against your heart. I can not consent to his terms under the circumstances." Mary said no more, but her pale face flushed as she turned away.

Stephen hastened to the old man's bedside. In the room were two nurses and the assistant minister of the Bishop's Church. The dying man turned his eyes upon his adopted son, then motioned the others

from the room. He rallied enough to speak feebly, but his strength was rapidly waning.

"My dear boy," he said as Stephen took his hand, "I thought I would be permitted to live until you came, but my time is short. Stephen, I have left my all to Mary and to you, under a condition which I hope you will not refuse. You are both like my own children, and I want to see Mary your wife before I die; do not refuse my last request."

Stephen could not speak. No words could express his chagrin, his deep regret that he must deny the last wish of one who had been as a father to him. The old man feebly reached out his hand and laid it on the hand of his adopted son. "You must not refuse," he said. "Your whole future depends upon your consent."

At last Stephen spoke, but the words came with an effort. "My dear foster father, I love another."

"I feared so, my boy," replied the Bishop, "but time will show you that what you think is love is but a sudden infatuation. You have known Mary always, and I am sure have cared for her greatly until recently. Your work is here ready at hand. You can spend an honored and useful existence here, with this dear girl, in comfort, in well being, and well doing. I have always associated you both in this way, and I can not die in peace knowing I must be disappointed. In time Mary will be everything to you; you will love her, and all will be well."

Stephen's face became of a deathly pallor, almost like that of the dying man. A struggle was taking

place in his mind. On one side stood the lonely girl he had left a few days since to the mercy of an unprincipled stepfather. The girl whom he now knew was the one he had loved and lost in a long-past existence. Must he lose her again?

On the other side was arrayed a mighty obligation to this man who had saved him from the orphan's fate, who had bestowed everything upon him that wealth could purchase, and had made few requests from him in return. Ought he, could he, refuse his dying wish?

The Archbishop spoke again: "Answer, Stephen," he implored faintly, for he was growing weaker. Stephen never knew how he came to give the answer the Archbishop desired. He struggled against it, but it seemed that another soul took possession of his body, that another spirit spoke through his lips; "I promise," it said, but the spirit of Stephen Wyndham remained silent.

The door opened and the assistant rector with the two nurses entered. "Call Mary," said the Archbishop, in failing tones.

Mary came, and the Bishop whispered to his assistant to perform the marriage ceremony. But the young girl glanced at Stephen, and bent over the old man. "No, no, Uncle," she said.

Are the dying selfish, or do they feel that they are acting for the best toward those whom they love? When they pass to a state where they are perhaps unconscious of the life just finished, or if lingering near the world of physical emotions for awhile, they

see with a clearer vision; is it right that those left behind should become victims of these forced death-bed promises?

As wrapping after wrapping of earthly flesh is removed from the inner electric bulb of the spirit, will not the soul that has passed on, regret, if it does remember the unhappiness it may have caused?

In response to Mary's words of remonstrance, the Archbishop turned upon her a reproachful look. "Child, will you break my heart?" he said.

The young girl said no more, and the old man motioned to his assistant rector to proceed with the ceremony according to instructions which had been previously given him. But that there was something wrong here, the latter could not fail to perceive. He opened his ritual and began the ceremony, while the Archbishop fixed his eyes upon the young couple. He had reached the words addressed to Stephen, "Do you take this woman to be your wife?" and waited for an answer. It was never given; and whether it would have been given, Stephen never knew himself; for at that moment the Archbishop's head fell on one side, his eyes closed, and his spirit passed on to the next plane.

When the pretentious funeral services were over, the lawyers entrusted with the Archbishop's affairs read to Mary and Stephen the disposition of his wealth, in his last will and testament. In case of a marriage between these two, they inherited his great wealth jointly. If they did not marry as he wished, the entire property went to his niece; and Stephen

was left with nothing. He did not regret this, could he be free, but he felt in a way *bound* to the promise he had made.

The Brownes had taken Mary into their own home, and the residence of the Archbishop would soon be closed. Stephen had finished packing the possessions he felt were really his own, and another day or two would see him leaving the place he had so long called home.

One evening the Brownes called with Mary, and she went into the library on some errand of her own. Stephen followed, and found her standing before a large painting of the Archbishop. "Mary," said he, "I gave your Uncle a promise." "Yes, Stephen," she interrupted, "but it was forced from you; it was not *you* who spoke the words he demanded. Never speak of it again, the matter is ended, and you and I will be friends henceforth. I want you to marry the one you love, and my best wishes will follow you. And one thing more, I shall give you back what it is only right that you should have: one-half of Uncle's money."

"You will not, Mary," said Stephen, "for I shall never take it. I appreciate your good, unselfish heart, but having disappointed your uncle's wish, I shall never receive that money."

"Well, Stephen, I may not prevail upon you to take it, but I too can be firm. I shall never use it. I will invest your share, and if you will not use the income, it shall be spent for charity. It shall be given to worthy objects in your name."

"Well, then, so it will have to be, dear Mary, until

you see things differently, and are willing to change your mind."

"I shall never change in this matter, you may rest assured," said Mary.

Thus the matter was settled. But though Mary Hamilton refused to accept more than one-half that had been left to her, she was, even then, a rich woman; one whom George Rolston would now consider beyond him, even if she herself should change toward him.

As for Stephen, he was now in no position to marry any one. Accustomed for years to wealth, he did not regret its loss, could he have gained the woman he loved. But he owned nothing now; he was not even established in his medical profession; and felt that he could never begin it *here,* even though this was the one place which promised him success. He must leave here; and yet beside his medical education he had nothing except a few hundred dollars, in all, perhaps a thousand, which had been given him at different times as gifts by his foster father, and which he had placed in a savings bank in Calcutta.

That night Stephen sat until midnight in the library taking a farewell of everything. He bent forward to gaze at the Archbishop's picture. "Dear foster father," he thought, "if you could forgive me and tell me so, I would not hereafter have to carry with me a lasting regret that I disappointed your last wish." A slight breeze seemed at this instant to move aside the portieres between the library and the next room. Was he dreaming? In the doorway stood the

STEPHEN'S VISION IN THE LIBRARY

"Between the portieres the Archbishop stood smiling, as he had looked twenty years ago."

Archbishop; not pale and sinking as Stephen had seen him last, but in the vigor and countenance of twenty years before, as he was at the time he first brought his adopted son home, and into this very room. Yet there was an ethereal look as of a great change in the composition of his body. In an instant Stephen knew that it was the astral form of the Bishop standing between the portieres and smiling upon him. Then, with a look of benediction, the vision faded.

Almost immediately following this he heard a call, as from a long distance, though it still seemed close in his ear. "Stephen! Stephen, come to me!"

"I must be dreaming," he thought, "or if not, that is the voice of Irene." He listened, and heard it again; then once more, between the portieres, the face of the Archbishop appeared, and smiling again, as if in blessing, gradually faded away like a picture upon a screen. Then by some inner psychic knowledge Stephen knew that he was forgiven; and more than this, that Irene had called him, and his foster father had blessed him and bid him go to the woman he loved.

So ended the bitter struggle. In some way, he knew that all yet would be well. And he felt that he must hasten; the call of the spirit of the absent girl had sounded as an appeal for help, for sympathy and protection, which he alone could give her.

He made ready to leave Calcutta, and India, for Kashmir, where Irene must now be. In the morning he went to say farewell to the Brownes, who loved

and sympathized with both him and Mary. When the latter said good-bye she sent to Miss Kozlov her love and wishes for happiness for both herself and Stephen. So Stephen knew once more in his soul that Mary, too, would be henceforth to them both as a dear sister and a friend.

"And have you no message for George Rolston?" he said at parting. Mary hesitated, and a slight flush spread over her face. "Not now," she answered, "not at *present,*" and emphasized the last word. For Mary Hamilton's pride had been more injured than her heart. In the knowledge of her uncle's plans, which she had accepted, she found it difficult, at first, to adjust herself to the thought of any other than the one whom she had considered for some years, until lately, to belong wholly to herself. Now, that she had given him up to the woman he really loved, she began to realize that she had thrown away the affections of another, one who cared for her, as Stephen cared for Irene.

She knew that George Rolston's love was sincere and disinterested, but that now he would not venture to seek her again. He would feel that he could not make another effort to win one whose wealth seemed to lift her beyond him.

So Stephen left India, and all his old friends and associations, never to return again, though they could not foresee this. And many years would pass before Lieutenant Rolston, either, would return to Calcutta.

There are with us all, times, seasons, and opportunities, which hold out beckoning hands, and urge us to

avail ourselves of their fleeting benefits. Taken, when offered, they would have altered the whole tenor of our lives. But is it our doing that we reject them? Or is it the leading of a higher wisdom which knows a shorter way to the attainment of the same end,—the growth of the soul?

The wisdom, which directs our lives, may see that happiness and prosperity are dwarfing our spiritual growth, and may divert the tide of circumstance. Or, again, it may see that we have earned by patience in tribulation an amelioration of the hard discipline, and guide us, for a time, into the paths where flowers bloom and joy is all around us.

Chapter XXII.

The Vale of Cashmir

From the last bungalow station on the steep heights overlooking this beautiful valley, the traveler descends through a charming country, following the river banks past an old fortress which seems to guard the entrance of the Vale. Standing melancholy and alone, it has an aspect of pondering on the change from its once glorious and happy past. The surrounding Himalaya mountains form a barrier to the outside world.

One entering here might well feel, as did Lieutenant Rolston, and also Irene Kozlov, that the past was left behind. The once happy valley might, indeed, be considered a field for missionary work, for it had seen its people, from long subjection to stern and tyrannical rulers, sink into a state of languid, indolent lethargy. Discouraged and hopeless, they lived with no care or ambition for either present or future.

The Kashmirians, with the inhabitants of the Ladak had become vassals of England, Kashmir being ruled over by the Maharajah, who was appointed by their Indian sovereign.

Descending the valley along the river, Jhe-lum, which has cut its way through a narrow pass in the mountains to join the river Indus, Lieutenant Rolston

came upon a regiment of cavalry belonging to the Maharajah. Beyond this point he found that it was a day's journey, on horseback, and about the same by boat, to Serinagur, the capital city, which contained about 100,000 inhabitants.

Serinagur, or, as it is often called, "Cashmere," was the station to which Rolston had been sent. But he had left his company of soldiers in the little village of Sindh at the head of the valley, while he went ahead to make arrangements for their future location. He decided to go on, from the point where he met the Maharajah's cavalry, by boat.

There is a legend that the Vale of Kashmir was once an inland sea, but that its waters had forced a passage through the environing mountain walls; then sweeping through this, they had left no trace behind except the numerous ponds of water throughout the country, and the Jhe-lum river which empties into the Indus.

In the early morning Lieutenant Rolston found his boat gliding past beautiful scenes. Banks of velvety verdure were outlined against snow-capped peaks. Charming villages nestled at the foot of these mountains. The Jhe-lum river was crystal clear, the atmosphere was soft and balmy, the sky of an azure blue. Sweet fragrant odors from the lilac and syringa bushes along the shore lulled him into a dreamy state, soothing him also by the twittering and warbling of innumerable birds in the bushes. He exclaimed: "This beautiful, beautiful country; I will not leave it now; let me here forget the past."

The magnificent scenery continued to unfold like a panorama before his eyes, while the picturesque shores, behind, gradually faded away. Enchanted islands in a paradise of lilacs, ancient ruins, historical palaces, picturesque pagodas, mysteriously hidden in the green verdure, apparently glided by him, while above all rose the snow-covered peaks of the majestic Himalayas.

At last "Serinagur" (which means "City of the Sun") was reached and the boat moved more slowly, till it finally stopped at the white pier. Along the banks were gathered a crowd of people, the men wearing oriental turbans, and the women white caps, while both wore the long robes of the country with wide flowing sleeves.

A long row of boats and floating houses lined the river banks at the entrance to the city. In these lived entire families the year round. The setting sun seemed to be the signal for all business to cease. Hundreds of gaily colored boats adorned with palanquins were now moored to the quay; while the Kashmirians performed their evening ablutions, without regard to the presence of others, this being a custom of the country.

The next morning George Rolston awoke in a room overlooking the river which sparkled and glistened beneath the glorious sun of Kashmir. This ancient and once prosperous, but ever celebrated, Vale of Kashmir, is 85 miles in length and 25 miles in breadth.

During the reign of the Great Mogul it enjoyed

its greatest glory. Then the court gathered at Serinagur in palaces and villas which still stand on the small islands of the lakes.

Many of the Maharajahs of Hindostan once spent the summer months here also, and took part in the sumptuous round of festivities given by the Great Mogul. But time had brought about sad changes. The once happy valley had become the home of an impoverished people; and worse, a resort of beggars.

Weeds and noxious plants now covered the waters of the once lovely, limpid inland lakes. The wild juniper bush everywhere choked the vegetation of the islands. Palaces and pavilions were overspread with dust and rank growth of weeds. The white pinnacles of the mountains looked mournfully down upon the scene, as if remembering its dead grandeur, and waiting in hope of better days.

The two-storied white houses along the river banks shelter the majority of the population. Several palaces, however, are occupied by the suite of the Maharajah.

Many villas also are occupied by the families of the English officers.

The common people and middle class live upon the river, whose banks are united by ten or twelve large bridges. The houses are close to the river's edge, and steps lead to it from every house. At all hours of the day, though especially at evening, bathing is going on. There is also much washing of cooking utensils, in the river daily. These articles consist of a few brass vessels or jugs. Life is very simple here,

and much of the employment for women and children seems to be bathing, and washing of dishes and clothing, accompanied by gossiping.

The inhabitants were once intellectual, handsome and clean. But having been governed long by the lash, invaded and pillaged by nation after nation, they had reached a state of degeneration. Most of them, filthy and lazy, appeared indifferent to everything. There were many of the better element of the middle class, however, quietly engaged in making their celebrated cashmere shawls, or cutting designs in gold and silver. Still, as a rule, misery seemed to prevail. Though all were extremely melancholy in appearance, the women, especially, wore upon their faces a look of inexpressible sadness, while at the same time they were still very beautiful.

The opulence of the land presented a great contrast to the condition of the people. About one-third of the inhabitants were Mohammedans, while two-thirds were Brahmins. There were also a few Buddhists.

Here, Irene Kozlov had believed she might find a missionary work during the time they would stay.

Count Kozlov had planned to remain here for a long time, believing that in this far distant forgotten part of the world, he would be safe from the pursuit of the law.

But now, to George Rolston the situation seemed a dilemma. He arranged to settle his company at one of the deserted villas, and returned on the next day to the little village of Sindh at the head of the valley.

He felt that he must remain near Irene Kozlov for the present, as he was the only friend the helpless girl could now depend upon, with the exception of the faithful Kirza. On his return he found that the manuscripts and papers, left by Count Kozlov, had been examined by the two Russian officials. They had learned that he had squandered the fortune of his step-daughter, with the exception of a small villa, in her native town, worth a few thousand dollars. Although all the property, he claimed, was forfeited to the government, yet on the report of the Russian detectives and the sworn statement of Lieutenant Rolston, these few thousands remaining were restored to the penniless girl by the Russian city authorities. George Rolston was placed in charge of these funds until she should be restored to health. Or, in case of her death, they were to be returned to her native town in Russia.

In the meantime Irene lay unconscious of her surroundings, either in a delirium or in a stupor. Sometimes in the former, she raved of her fears for her father's safety from the Russian law. At others she dwelt upon his terrible death. And still again, she would call for Stephen to come to her.

One day, Miriam, the Kashmirian nurse, followed George Rolston as he was leaving the hospital. "Master George," said she, "our dear Irene has been calling all day for Stephen. Who is Stephen? Can you not send for him? For then, Miriam believes our dear Irene would recover."

The simple and childlike way of putting this to Rolston struck him forcibly and caused him to wonder why he had not thought of this himself. He remembered the camp fire in the Himalayas, when Stephen and Irene had talked so late. He remembered other things also, and he determined to act upon his own responsibility. "Miriam," said he, "thank your kind heart for thinking of this. Tell Kirza to repeat slowly, to Irene when she raves, these words, 'Stephen Wyndham will soon be here.' Repeat them yourself to her when you are with her, and perhaps she may grasp the thought. And now I will go at once and send the message which I am sure will bring him, if it is possible for him to come."

With a sad sweet smile Miriam replied, "Thank you, Master George, now Irene will get well."

Then she glided noiselessly away while George looked after her with a puzzled expression. "What is there about this strange girl which fascinates one?" thought he again. "She seems so far from, so aloof from the world, as if living on another planet; and yet so gentle, so thoughtful, so faithful to every duty."

He left the building and went immediately to send the message which might bring to the patient the one means of recovery.

As Stephen was leaving Calcutta, the message was handed him. Then he knew again that he had been called. Then he believed firmly that the Archbishop's spirit had returned to direct him, and assure him of his own consent.

Chapter XXIII.

The Amulet is Stolen by a Monk

Lieutenant Rolston's business in Serinagur was not entirely military. He had another errand there. He had left the papers belonging to Count Kozlov at the hotel on the bluff in Sindh, that they might be examined by the Russian officials.

But had they known of the existence of the jeweled necklace, they would have seized it in the name of the law.

Even then it might be a matter of doubt whether it ever reached Russia.

Its great value was a temptation many officials would be unable to resist.

But George Rolston had decided what to do. Not another day would he delay in placing it beyond their reach.

For he well realized the financial condition in which Irene Kozlov would now be left. To her the Amulet must surely go.

The jewels were worth a small fortune.

So on his trip to Serinagur, he took the treasure with him to deposit it in the English bank there for safe-keeping during the illness of its owner. He had not noticed that he was *followed* upon the boat in

which he journeyed down the river to the capital.

The night before the trip he stayed at the hotel on the bluff. In his room that evening he was placing the Amulet in its box or case, with great care, when a shadow passed his window, which opened on a long balcony.

As he looked up, for one instant, he caught the gleam of a pair of eyes, gazing out from a cowled face. It was the face of a priest he had never seen before. The eyes were fastened covetously upon the beautiful gems whose colors reflected a brilliant glow throughout the room. It was for a moment only, and then the face was gone. This did not impress Rolston as it might, had the vision been any other than that of a priest; for he had come to believe in the sincerity of the class. Even when he saw this man come upon the boat, and recognized the face and eyes, he suspected nothing.

He was occupied during the trip, as we have said, in gazing at the scenery upon the river banks, and did not notice the Monk continually hovering near him. On reaching Serinagur, Rolston went into the Bank and the priest followed. Rolston secured a safety deposit box and there deposited the necklace.

The priest likewise asked for a box, and deposited a *parchment* of much value and great antiquity.

This business concluded, they both left the building.

Rolston went to another part of the city, on his military business and saw the priest no more.

The Monk, however, went down the marble steps

of the entrance and around to the rear of the great Bank, which like many buildings in the city bordered upon the water's edge at its back. Descending another flight of steps to the river, he entered a house-boat which was moored there.

Here he was met by a man who seemed to be its only occupant. This man was the night watchman of the Bank, and if the truth were known, was also a distant cousin of the Monk, and as great a rascal as his hypocritical relative.

Both men now sat down to refreshments of food and wine, especially the latter.

They engaged in an absorbing conversation, though in low and guarded tones. After the close of the meal the Monk rose to depart, saying, "Remember then, I will return here a little before midnight. Do your work quickly and join me on the boat within half an hour after the stroke of twelve. By sunrise we must be far down the river."

"And my reward then is *sure,* is it?" said the boatman, alias the night watchman of the Bank.

"It is sure, and no suspicion will fall on you," replied the Monk.

That night, just after the hour of twelve had struck, the watchman going his rounds of the Bank building, paused at the door of the room where were the safety deposit vaults.

He had keys with him which had been provided by the priest. Unlocking the door of the room, he entered, and pausing before the vaults he drew from

his garments a paper with a number upon it, which had also been furnished by the Monk.

He found the corresponding number upon one of the boxes, and with another key he unlocked this, and drew from it the Amulet.

Fascinated, he gazed for one moment, then for safe-keeping he placed it around his neck and under his garment.

He had not noticed a stealthy form which had crept up behind him, the form of the monk who was supposed to be waiting for him on the house-boat.

All day over Serinagur and the entire valley, a storm had been hovering, its black clouds occasionally lit up with flashes of lightning.

At the instant when the night watchman was re-locking the safety box, there came a sharp flash of lightning, followed by a deafening crash of thunder.

That moment the priest sprang forward, a short dagger in his hand. But the lightning was before him, and the watchman was dead. However, he would make the thing sure, so he buried his sword in the heart of his relative.

"Die, poor fool!" he said, "the treasure is mine!" Quickly he unfastened it, and snatched it from the watchman's neck.

Another moment and he was out of the room. Through the corridor he fled, and around the building and on to the house-boat.

This he detached from its moorings, and went slipping down the stream toward the village where he

would take a palanquin first, and then a horse for Ladak.

When the watchman was found next morning, it was at first supposed that he had been murdered while protecting the Bank. But later when his robe was removed, as they made ready to bury him, around his neck was seen a strange sight.

The outline of the Amulet necklace was marked in the flesh, so perfectly traced that, even the serpent's head in lines of livid hue, seemed to speak and reveal his part in the robbery.

But the Amulet itself was gone. That the man had an accomplice was certain.

Not by anything the law could do, however, would the treasure return.

The murderer priest was on his journey, secure and unmolested. His profession was a safeguard, a shield from all suspicion.

He assured himself that once more in Tibet he would be safe. There he would take the necklace apart. He would sell the stones separately, until at last he was a rich man. Then he could leave the monastery, and go out into the wide world. Passing over the great Eastern Road, which led out of Tibet into China, he might even find a new home beyond those boundaries, and be safer still.

Thus he planned, as another had planned; and like that other, his Karma was waiting; waiting for that moment which is chosen by the Gods.

But the monk's funds were running low. He had not gold enough to reach Tibet.

He considered the matter. He might sell one or two stones to some merchant returning to India. He detached three of the gems; for he was an expert in the jeweler's trade, as well as in the business of locks and keys.

After doing this, he, like the watchman, clasped the Amulet around his neck for safety. It was now smaller and felt somewhat constricted. But this was the safest place for it. His robe covered it; and also a Kashmirian scarf, which was around his neck.

The priest was high in the ranks of his Order; well on the "Way" to Nirvana; yet he was tempted and fell, like Lucifer and his angels. His lofty position he believed would shield him. But he had not counted on the occult wisdom of the Wise Man.

At last he reached the monastery of Leh. He was ushered into the presence of the White Mahatma. The stillness of the white room fell around him. Yet the serene figure seemed to look strangely upon him.

"Oh, Master," said the monk, "I come from Kashmir, where I have left at Serinagur, in the keeping of the great Bank, a valuable parchment. Two monasteries are contending for its ownership. Until this is decided, it remains safely there. By way of the Ladak, I am returning to Tibet."

A long, long pause ensued. The Adept waited. His eyes rested upon the priest before him. Deeper and deeper that awful gaze sank into the monk's soul. It seemed to burn its way through the physical vesture, and penetrate with its occult vision the secret of the guilty spirit within.

"Son," at last said the Adept, and his tones silvery and like a bell, seemed to come from some tribunal far beyond the boundaries of the earth; "Son, hast thou done *well,* in thy dealing with thy brother man? Hast thou *loved him* as thine own self?"

"I have tried, O Master, so to do, even according to the teaching of the Great Buddha. Bestow upon me, I pray thee, thy blessing," replied the hypocrite priest.

Still longer now the awful pause; the silence was filled with strange whisperings and mutterings and rustlings of ghostly forms, or so it seemed to the murderer in heart.

Again the Adept spoke, in those far-off tones, the careful measure of perfect justice falling from each vibrating accent. Yet were they tempered with pity for one whose feet had left the "Way"; who must go back again, and live over many weary lives, to work out this latest sin. "It will be unto *thee,* my son, even as thou hast *done,* and willed to do to *others.* Thus does Karma work. Remember, the flesh must surely suffer, that the soul be saved."

The moment decreed by the gods had arrived. The thread of life was cut, but the monk knew it not yet. He bent low, and turned to depart. He reached the door, he passed into the larger room. Then a strange constriction seized him around the throat. The hidden necklace! It was growing smaller. His face turned purple, he clutched his neck. He tried to unclasp the Amulet, for his eyes were starting from

their sockets. He staggered out upon the monastery porch.

There he fell dead upon the floor, beneath the great prayer wheel around which were gathered the priests of the Convent. They loosened his robe, and unwound the scarf.

Then they found that he had been strangled to death by a wonderful serpent necklace.

Gradually it had shrunk in circumference. It had become smaller, until it would barely clasp the arm of a child.

They searched his garments for his name. They found the detached gems and keys. They carried all to the Wise Man, and laid them before him. The Adept was in a deep reverie. His hands were clasped, his eyes were turned within. A look of pity was on his face.

This priest, an advanced soul, well on the "Path," had again departed from it. Far back in their evolution they had been near each other. But ambition had hindered the monk's progress, and he had fallen many lives behind.

"My son, would I might have saved thee!" said the Adept. "But it could not be; for each soul must bear the result of his own sin. Thy Karma must follow *thee,* and thee alone."

Wonderingly the convent monks withdrew, and by themselves they talked long in low tones.

"Who *was* this monk?" they asked; but no one knew.

Then there drew near an older priest, who knew

more of the mysterious occult, than these younger ones. "Children," said he, "when one has progressed so far along the 'Way,' as has our great 'Mahatma,' the relationships of the flesh are left behind. But remembrance is gained. Here before you lies one, who must have been, in lives long past, very near to the Wise Man. He may have been a pupil, or perhaps a loved brother of the flesh.

"As the soul of the crystal grows to the soul of a man, so grows the soul of a man to the soul of a world; the soul of a world to that of a great angel, and that of a great angel to the soul of a Universe. Just so may the soul of a man grow *small* through pride and weakness of will, and desire for worldly gain. It *may* after long retrogression, be finally *severed* from its spiritual 'Ray,' and pass out of the scheme of the present universe.

"To our limited comprehension that soul is *then lost* for an eternity; the Eternity belonging to *this* Creation. But it may return, eventually, in some far distant evolution of another Universe.

"The great progressed soul of our Adept is not beyond the despairing cry of the lost spirit.

"From its high plane it hears, and it remembers. It *feels* the doom, of one who has chosen extinction of the Divine; whose Spiritual Ray has left it, and returned to the Source."

Thus the priests came to understand why the Wise Man, the "Mahatma," remained in the silent white room in meditation, deep and profound.

He was recalling an earlier life, when the one

doomed today *had* been close to him in some dear physical relationship; but whose soul had retrograded even as his own had progressed. For himself, the heavenly heights of world beyond world; for his brother, a downward career, it might be until the *end* of this world scheme.

George Rolston never knew just *how* the Amulet was returned. But a month later the Bank officials sent for him. They had recently opened the deposit box from which the necklace had been stolen.

To their astonishment then, they saw the treasure, its stones all there and gleaming brilliantly. They knew not how or whence it came.

Perhaps through means of forged keys it was restored; or it may be, by that occult power that is not hindered by locks, or walls, or prison bars.

Chapter XXIV.

After Fifteen Years, in Which the Amulet has become Famous

When Stephen reached the English hotel upon the Cliffs overlooking the village of Sindh, in the valley of Kashmir, he learned all that could be told regarding Count Kozlov and his step-daughter. The Russian detectives had stayed there, and their errand had become known. George Rolston had remained uncommunicative in his efforts to shield Irene Kozlov; but to Stephen he told everything, and they agreed that, so far as was in their power, the truth regarding the Count should be kept from her.

When the crisis of the brain fever passed and she recognized Kirza and George Rolston, and Stephen, when he came, she remained for days in a weak, dazed condition. She asked no questions, but seemed to rest peacefully in the assurance that Stephen was with her. It was not until weeks after that they cautiously told her the situation of her affairs and Stephen's. With no allusion to the discovery of her step-father's crimes, they simply informed her that he had wasted her fortune, with the exception of a few thousand dollars which, carefully invested, would furnish her a small home.

When she learned also the condition of Stephen's

affairs, she considered matters for several days until she had studied out her future and his. If Stephen had been left with money and position, she might still have refused to link his life with hers, which must always, more or less, carry with it the association of her father's crimes, for she knew, even though they did not tell her, that he had been a suspected man. Even when she learned that he was not her own father, she would still have felt a hesitancy in marrying Stephen.

But when she found that the latter had sacrificed and lost everything, money, position and future career; and that he was content to do so, for her, she consented to marry him at once. This would allow them to begin plans for their mission work here, which seemed to be all that remained to Stephen now. So they were married by the English chaplain at Serinagur.

Then Irene put part of the few thousand, remaining to her, into a small bungalow home near the hospital. In addition to this she erected a modest building for a school, and another for an unpretentious little chapel, where they might conduct English services for the little Mission which she hoped to establish.

Then came the Kashmirian physician from Serinagur, who had attended her during her illness. "Brother Stephen," said he, "I need an assistant in my work; the calls upon my time in the capital city are all I can manage. I need some one to attend to the villages all through the valley. Can you not be that

one? It would still leave you time to assist your wife in her mission work."

This was an idea which came as a godsend to Stephen, for he felt that it was sincere; that the good doctor *did* actually need the assistance, which he alone in all the Vale, was able to render. With Miriam's help as a nurse, and with Irene's as a teacher the prospect began to open out, as it always does when the road is closed to us in the old direction in which we have been moving so long.

He accepted the offer; and so fifteen years of work and happiness had passed away. His work had prospered. He was often called in consultation to the capital city, Serinagur, or Cashmere, for it is called by both names. He was thrust into prominence by the good Kashmirian doctor, as well as by his own ability. Among the English and Indian officials also he was highly respected.

The school, too, had attained prominence. Better buildings had been erected. The children of the English officials sought the privilege of attending, and gladly paid a reasonable tuition. To the poor of the valley, however, the tuition was free. Yet, in their way, and according to their ability, they showed their appreciation. Flowers, fruits, vegetables, game, rare gifts of their own manufacture, such as in the great business world would command a high price, all were brought, freely and gladly, to the doors of the school and offered to the loved physician and his wife.

These adored teachers and helpers for fifteen years had never refused, night or day, to go to the humble

cottages of the villagers and render what help they could. In joy or sorrow the people had learned to depend upon their unfailing sympathy.

And Miriam, the Kashmir girl nurse, was with them also, heart and soul. Since her lover was killed a few months before the coming of the teachers, by the accident in Tiger Gorge, not even among her own people had she found such a relationship as now existed between herself, Irene, Stephen and George, and the faithful Kirza. She always attended the little chapel where English services had been established. These services were not exactly orthodox, neither were they heterodox. But Stephen and Irene had grown out of all narrow limitations, into that wider knowledge and religion in which the brotherhood of man is the main spring of all. No especial creed was taught. Indeed, it would have given offense in a country where Mohammedanism, Brahminism and Buddhism all existed.

No good could have been done by such opposition. But they inculcated the principles of living the Golden Rule, and loving one another as themselves. They taught their humble pupils and followers that life here is but a school in which the great aim is the spirit's progress towards perfection. And they lived themselves what they taught to the people.

In fifteen years there had come a change in the faces of the inhabitants of the valley, as well as in their general appearance and character. Gradually their melancholy expression had changed to one of cheerfulness. They had become more careful in their

dress. Untidiness was now the exception. Their indolence and laziness were also faults which had been generally overcome. Activity and ambition had replaced them. They would always be, however, a superstitious and childlike people, to a greater or less degree.

So it was not strange that the Amulet had formed a prominent feature in their education. For the Talisman had become celebrated not only throughout the valley and at Serinagur, but by means of travelers and visitors from many countries; the knowledge of its wonder working powers had reached India, and even England. Strangers began to visit the little chapel to see it and test its discernment.

It had been hung in a corner near the altar steps, upon a white marble cross. And there knelt the simple villagers as well as travelers from the world outside this narrow vale. Its gems, by some mysterious power, reflected the true nature of those who touched it. It revealed the Aura of their souls. Even the children visited the chapel, to test each other's good or bad qualities in this way. In this they came to take great pride, and finally the children of the valley became models of propriety when compared with others who had no such incentive.

A rich woman, from the far western world, in her travels had reached India. She had heard of the wonderful power of the Amulet to reflect character, and she visited Kashmir and the village of Sindh to see it.

This woman was noted for her charities. She had

given much money for the building of hospitals, schools and other public institutions. She felt well satisfied with her benevolent deeds. She was respected and reverenced also, by others. She rested calmly in the firm assurance that she had great treasure laid up in Heaven. That eventually there would be *many* to rise and call her a benefactor of the race. She stretched out her hand in a haughty manner, and touched the Egyptian necklace. Instantly it grew dim and lustreless.

She asked the caretaker of the chapel, an old man called "Josephus," to explain its working. He told her its history, and described the "Aura of the soul." In great humiliation this rich woman went away, for she saw that her motives had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. She knew now that personal pride in her great benefactions had surely dimmed the radiance of the spirit. She learned that gifts, bestowed in this way, do not build into the spiritual body the qualities which shall endure in the heavenly world.

There came another woman to the chapel; she too had traveled from afar, seeking the by-ways of poverty and of suffering. She was one of that great philanthropic army of workers who do not hesitate to go down into the lowest dens of vice or the most wretched homes, to relieve misery and elevate the downtrodden. The despised, the forsaken, were her brothers and sisters, for she wore the blue uniform with the crimson badge, which inspires the lost with hope.

This humble woman, a member of the Salvation Army, reached out her hand and touched the Amulet. What a radiance instantly glowed from every stone! White and dazzling brilliance encircled her head, shining like a halo. Brilliant colors, too, flashed around her entire body. In the spirit world she would dwell upon a plane the other woman could not reach, notwithstanding her charitable benefactions, her bestowals of her wealth.

Then came another to the little chapel: a man famous in the world for his high spiritual attainments, his eloquence, his power and influence over others. He sat in the seats of the mighty, in all places of churchly assemblage. He was a noted bishop. FFawned upon by those beneath him, flattered by the worship of the undiscerning multitude, he had risen to such eminence that he had lost sight of the stepping-stones by which he had climbed. He looked indifferently down upon the poor satellites beneath him who sought to obtain his favor.

His ambition, his love of adulation, his pride in the immense audiences which hung upon his eloquence had completely usurped his old desire to help poor, struggling sinners along the thorny road to Heaven. He left *that* work to his inferior ministers beneath him, while he went back and forth through the cities of his diocese gaining fresh glory and renown.

With a haughty, condescending smile he deigned to touch the Amulet; lo, what a change took place in its appearance! It quivered under his supercilious finger. Could this be the wondrous talisman of a

moment before? Instantaneously its stones had tarnished. The opals grew dark and gloomy in appearance. The rubies turned a sullen brownish red, the emeralds a dark sinister green.

These changes revealed the hidden character of the man, the pride, the selfishness, and forgetfulness of others which had become the real attributes of his nature. When the old caretaker explained the "Aura of the Soul" the proud bishop exclaimed, "Superstition! rank superstition of an ignorant people!" Then he departed sneering at the credulity which believed in such a revelation of the character.

As he left the chapel door there passed in another man, a poor, threadbare minister of the gospel, from a hamlet away on a western frontier of one of the United States.

By what means he had gathered together the funds necessary for this (to him) wonderful journey, can never be realized by the wealthy. For years he had labored and struggled and starved, with his wife and children, on the frontier. He had ridden over the plains at night, in the bitter cold and storm. He had ministered to the sick and dying. He had assisted in their humble festivities. For he was that hard-working, unappreciated, poorly paid servant of the Lord, known as a home missionary.

Now, after all his unselfish labors, after his humble, unrecognized, yet godly life, he was taking a well earned rest, with the scanty funds at his disposal. Part of these he had saved, no one knows how, and part had been given him by his children who had

grown up to be of some help to him. Too late to help his wife, poor thing, for overworked and underfed, she had died several years previously.

This man, in his threadbare scanty garb, passed the great Bishop, who failed to recognize a co-worker in the Master's vineyard. The poor missionary entered the chapel, for he too had heard the story of the Amulet's powers. If it were *true,* he humbly feared his poor attainments, his weak frailties, his unassuming, modest services to his fellow-man would not be capable of producing any change in the wonderful stones of the talisman.

Hesitatingly, he put out his hand and touched the Amulet. The latter had remained dull, gloomy and sinister since the Bishop's hand rested upon it. *But now,* wonderful! Wonderful! There came a flash of light which illuminated the whole building from one end to the other. It was growing dusk, and the *Bishop,* glancing back, supposed the chapel had just been *lighted* by the caretaker.

From every niche and corner was reflected the brilliant light. Its rays surrounded the poor home missionary in the form of an ovoid, extending several feet around him, as a dazzling burst of sunlight. Wonderingly he said to old Josephus, who had respectfully drawn near the visitor, "What does this mean, this beautiful radiance?"

"It means," replied the old caretaker reverently, "that one of the Masters, a great and good man, a true servant of God, has just *now* touched the Amulet."

Chapter XXV.

The Harbinger of Woe

Among the other changes in the valley during the fifteen years that had passed was the birth of a son to the teachers at the Mission. Five years ago he had appeared in their home; and though named by his parents "George," after Lieutenant Rolston, yet by all the natives of the village of Sindh, and throughout the Vale, he was called "The Angel Child," or often, only "Angel." His sunny disposition, his golden curls, his loving heart had endeared him to all who knew him. To his parents' hearts he brought such happiness that it seemed there was nothing more to be desired in their lives. Yet their ideal life was drawing to a close.

Often did Irene feel the shadow falling nearer and nearer as she remembered the words of the Wise Man of Leh: "The object of these mortal lives is not happiness, but progress of the soul." When, however, she recalled them to Stephen, he always answered, "Not yet, the end is not yet."

Still as the fifteenth year was coming to an end, the brilliancy of the Amulet began to wane. Its gems grew dull and misty. A feeling of premonition came over Stephen also. It may have been the reflec-

tion of the feeling of the inhabitants of the Vale; for they too, in their superstition, regarded with awe a recent arrival in the heavens above them.

The great "Comet" had appeared once more in the trackless space overhead their country. The oldest among them remembered when this comet, or another, had visited them before. Terrible troubles, war, devastation, subjection, slavery, all followed in its wake.

For some weeks now, the people of the villages between Sindh and the capital had gathered in bands at evening to watch the strange sight, which daily grew plainer and more awful.

Then during the night the bands of "singing girls" would go from house to house singing in mournful cadences, which resembled a monotonous wailing. The tenor of their songs was, that the people must prepare for some coming disaster. Not only were the Wyndhams unable to dispel these gloomy forebodings, but they themselves had a premonition of ill.

The sun withdrew under a cloud, one sultry morning in July, and remained there all day. Little George, the "Angel Child," wore a serious look in his melancholy dark eyes, those eyes which had the same expression his mother had seen so long ago in the eyes of the Kashmirian women of the Vale.

Today this expression was not counteracted by his usual gayety of words and action. He was seated quietly on the bungalow porch, talking with one of his Kashmirian playmates. Later his mother missed both children, and she went to the road which passed

the house and looked up and down. Then out on a path leading towards the river which, there, flowed through a narrow gorge she saw little George and his playmate running towards its banks, stopping now and then to pick a flower.

The other child was the only one remaining of four, to a poor Kashmirian widow, and therefore he was the idol of his mother's heart. As Irene gazed she saw both children run down the bank towards a boat moored there at the edge of the river. She knew instantly what the children were going to do. Even as she ran after them, she saw them step into the boat and, seizing an oar, attempt to push the craft along the side of the river bank.

Just beyond this spot, near a small bridge, was a dangerous eddying whirlpool, where more than one child had lost its life in the past years. She flew towards the river's edge, calling to them as she went. Kirza coming to the road now, from the house, also saw them and followed Irene as fast as she was able.

In the meantime Stephen was lying upon his couch in his office asleep. He had been up nearly all night with a sick soldier whom Lieutenant Rolston had brought to the hospital in Sindh several days before. Rolston had just come from the soldier's bedside to talk with Stephen about his patient, but finding him sleeping, was about to withdraw when the latter suddenly awakened and sprang up from the couch.

"Irene!" he called in frantic accents; then seeing George, he exclaimed: "Oh Rolston! my wife and child!" He rushed from the house, as he spoke,

followed by George, to the road, and then struck off towards the river. Rolston overtook him, and Stephen exclaimed, "George, I dreamed that they were drowning here in the river; I saw them going down in the whirlpool at the bridge."

Even as he spoke the tragedy took place. In some way the boat had become loosened from its mooring and was sweeping towards the dangerous eddy. Irene rushed out into the water, for the river was not deep near the banks. It suddenly became so, however, a few feet further on, for its bed in this place was a gorge. At that moment the boat struck the pier of the little bridge. It whirled around, and the Kashmirian child who was leaning over its edge, was flung into the river not far from Irene, who now stood in the water nearly to her waist.

Thoughts flash quickly through the mind in moments of great stress. In fact, the outer body becomes paralyzed; only the *mind* lives and acts, controlling its servant, the powerless clay. The small boat with her child in it, was already whirling round and round with the suction of the eddying pool; and as the end turned toward her in which was seated little George but one thought flashed through her soul—"My neighbor's child, or mine? I can not save them both." For the Kashmirian child in the water swept past her, the same instant that little George in the boat flashed in a circle close to her grasp. He was holding out his hands and calling in terrified tones, "Mamma, mamma." As in a dream she chose.

Reader, what would have been your choice? What

would have been the choice of any one but that soul living on a plane above all earthly relationships, a plane where everyone is a brother or a sister, and every one's child is as your own?

The poor Kashmirian woman had lost three children and her husband also. Irene in this moment did not reason, *she knew;* she saw by spiritual vision; she was guided, and she acted.

In that last hour, it may be she knew of the reunion not far away, and was satisfied. As Kirza followed her out into the water, Irene flung the Kashmirian child into the Hindoo woman's arms. Then she turned and rushed further in, after the whirling boat. She snatched her own child from it into her arms. The look of disappointment and non-comprehension which she had seen upon his face when his mother allowed him to sweep by her while she saved his little playmate instead,—that grieved look faded. Upon the face of the Angel Child as he swept into the whirlpool in his mother's arms was a smile of peaceful content. Safe in her embrace, he went to his death, as Irene sank deeper in the eddy and finally disappeared beneath the bridge.

Kirza had followed almost within the fatal circle herself when George Rolston rushed in and drew her out. He drew her towards Stephen lying unconscious on the bank, while the Kashmirian child stood crying near.

Yes, they were gone! In an hour, in a moment rather, his wife, the companion of those fifteen happy years, and the Angel Child. How *short* those years

seemed, now that they were over. Yet he had received a warning, a warning which he had hardly understood; but which had told him that the end of this little earthly day of happiness was drawing near.

George Rolston remained with Stephen through that night. After the latter had regained consciousness, he lay without speaking until nearly midnight. Then he called his friend to his side. "George," he said, "I knew it was near; I received a message a week ago; and when I waked from that terrible dream, I felt the end had come."

He reached toward the table, near the couch, and took from it a small oriental box. This he unlocked and holding up a letter, which it contained, said, "My dear friend, I know you can hardly believe me, but what I now tell you is true. This letter I found lying on my office table near me, just beside the couch where I was sleeping one afternoon last week, and upon the letter was lying this strange flower." He took from the box a large white faded flower, resembling a water lily, the sacred flower of the Egyptians. "This is the Lotus," said he; "an oriental, Egyptian or Babylonian water plant."

"George, my door was locked, the window screens were fastened. No one entered the room while I slept. The letter was not there when I fell asleep. It *was* there when I awoke. It is from the Wise Man of Leh, written upon this paper which was lying on my table, and laid beside me here. It warned me that the parting from my loved ones was near, and my own time short.

"I know that this is hard for you to believe, but these Adepts possess wonderful powers.

"Among other strange things, which they are able to do, is this one of writing, by what is called 'precipitation.' There is indisputable evidence that messages *have* been written by invisible hands and left where the recipient might find them. These messages are usually sent in times of danger, or great calamity, or as a warning. No explanation can be given of this in the scientific world. But in the realm of the occult it is revealed."

George Rolston replied, "You have looked into all these things more deeply than I, you have progressed further, Stephen, and I shall accept what you say as truth."

"Yes, George," said Stephen, "some day you will know it is the truth. Now, go and rest until morning."

The hours of that night slowly passed. All the next day the sun was hidden behind clouds. As evening again came on, the Comet glowing dully in the sky, stretched its fearsome length ominously over the entire valley.

A few persons who were still awake as the chapel bell struck the midnight hour, saw the amulet within, upon the marble cross, suddenly light up the whole building. It glowed with unearthly fires; then again grew misty, waned and faded.

Soon after, as the singing girls had finished their last mournful round of lamentation, and the villagers were just falling asleep, there seemed a foreboding

calm; an awful stillness, a suffocating oppression, which the few wakeful ones noticed. Then, with no further warning, the earth rose in one sickening upheaval, undulated a moment with quivering tremors, then sunk back and was quiet. Simultaneously with this came the crash of falling buildings, which was followed by screams and moans.

Those who were uninjured rushed into the open air. With hastily lighted lanterns they searched, and vainly tried to rescue the imprisoned ones. But not till morning dawned and they received help from the other villages could they extricate the victims.

Throughout the valley, and at the capital the earthquake had been felt. But Sindh had suffered most. Half the buildings of the village had been destroyed; among them the chapel, part of the hospital, and the school.

One-third of the inhabitants were dead beneath the ruins; others were maimed and mangled. It was weeks before all the dead were extricated and buried. In the meantime a sultry, sickening heat came upon the entire valley. And then the Comet did its worst. So said the superstitious, terrified inhabitants. The cholera broke out, and one-half of those left by the earthquake were carried off by this scourge.

Stephen up to this time had appeared dazed. But now he rallied. With Lieutenant Rolston and his soldiers he endeavored to keep order through the panic-stricken valley. Among the sick, the dying, he went, with George Rolston, Miriam, the Kashmir

nurse, and Kirza. The good doctor from Serinagur worked night and day.

In the early dawn of each morning, boxes borne by coolies, conveyed the dead beyond the village limits, where they were thrown together in one long trench. Midnight fires burned dully, from which rose an odor of burning household goods and clothing.

Three weeks passed and at last Stephen Wyndham came down with the dread disease. To George Rolston he said, "Do not try to save me; I want to go; the time for me to pass on has come. I am thankful now that my dear ones went as they did. George, I seem to know that sooner or later you will take up the Mission work here, at least to oversee it, to restore it if possible. Something tells me, too, that you and Mary Hamilton will yet be united. In the oriental box are papers of which you must take charge. And now all is well. Do nothing more for me."

They did, however, work hard, to save Stephen, but he left them and passed to the plane where Irene awaited him, with the Angel Child.

George Rolston, Kirza and Miriam went untouched through the terrible epidemic. Yet Miriam had courted death; for fifteen years, since the accident which had taken her lover from her, she had longed to die.

Slowly the comet faded from the sky. Slowly the dread disease waned. It came under control and gradually died out. Far more slowly still the remaining inhabitants rebuilt their homes. There was no money to rebuild the chapel, or the school. But the

doctor of Serinagur, at his own expense, restored the hospital in the course of time.

Chapter XXVI.

Miriam, the Beloved of the Valley

The cooler weather caused a slight reaction in the villages of the Vale. Such a blow as they had suffered had paralyzed the inhabitants, especially at Sindh.

The Kashmirian physician of the capital had taken the first step, by rebuilding the fallen portion of the hospital. He next endeavored to repair the chapel. Through the efforts of Lieutenant Rolston money was finally obtained for this purpose. But the school was forced to remain closed, as there were no funds available for restoring the partly fallen buildings.

As for the Amulet, it was gone! Its weird history was ended; only its memory went down the years, in the Vale of Kashmir. Engulfed in a crevice which had opened in the church yard for an instant and then closed forever, it passed from the world, leaving its lesson behind, in the hearts of the simple people.

They buried Stephen here, and raised a monument over his grave. On this was inscribed a few words only: "To our Brother and Sister and the Angel Child."

Every Sabbath, the people who were left behind by the double disaster brought flowers and beautiful gar-

lands of wreathed designs. They left these with old Josephus, the caretaker of the chapel and cemetery; and later in the day, towards evening he, with Miriam and George Rolston, arranged them around the monument. They were engaged in this occupation one Sabbath evening at sunset about a month after the excitement in the valley had quieted down.

Miriam had seemed during all this month to be growing very weak. The Kashmirian physician considered it the result of overwork, and said she must now take a long rest.

She felt, however, that her services were more needed than ever, among the survivors, now that the Wyndhams were gone. So she endeavored to keep on working. Tonight she had made an effort to come here to the little cemetery, for the purpose of arranging the flowers which had been brought.

George Rolston was standing near the monument watching the caretaker as he placed the wreaths upon the grave. Suddenly he saw Miriam looking intently toward the monument beside him. An expression of joy spread over her face. With an ejaculation which caused old Josephus to lift his head, she held out her arms as if in welcome recognition of some one whom she saw. At the same time a look of astonishment and fear came over the old caretaker's face, as he too gazed fixedly in the same direction. George turned quickly to see whom it could be. Close beside the monument, and near himself, stood a young man clothed in hunting garb; a noble-looking young Kashmirian of about twenty-five years of age. George

saw the stranger plainly, yet as he gazed, the young man disappeared, or vanished, or faded away, as it seemed. At this moment Miriam fell forward upon the grass with the smile still upon her face.

When George Rolston and old Josephus raised her, they found that she was dead. They took her to the chapel and sent word to the village. As they waited for assistance at the chapel door, George said to old Josephus, "Who was that young man standing by the monument, and why did he leave so hastily?"

"Master," replied the old caretaker in a hushed and solemn whisper, "it was *no man;* it was the spirit of 'Kargil,' Miriam's lover; he was killed by an accident while hunting, more than fifteen years ago. I saw him when he left the village that morning, long ago, on that fatal trip. Just as he looked that day, he looked tonight. Miriam was always expecting him, Master; she believed he would come for her some time; and tonight he came."

Yes, he had come for her. The look of joy upon her face left no doubt of that. The waiting was over. They were united at last.

Then another grave was made beside the monument, and upon the latter these words were added: "Miriam, Angel of Sindh."

Flowers were brought for her also, week after week and month after month. Her memory was handed down to the younger generation with that of the Mission teachers whom she loved.

George Rolston felt that *he* was indeed alone; for Miriam had been like a dear sister to him, as well as

to the Wyndhams. After their death, he had sent the faithful Kirza back to the Brownes in Calcutta. Now he determined to ask for a furlough and return to India also.

One day late in October, he came over from Serinagur to stay at the hotel on the bluff above the village of Sindh, over the Sabbath.

He would, for the last time, place the wreaths upon the graves and upon the monument. The hours of the Sabbath afternoon he spent there. He said farewell to the place, feeling that he was leaving it perhaps forever. He was a lonely man.

Fifteen years before he had resigned the girl he loved. Now the friends who had made those long years endurable for him had also left him. He hardly knew where to go. Calcutta long ago had lost its interest. Since Mary Hamilton had refused his love, he had never cared to return there.

Yes, he was a lonely man of forty now. Youth had passed, and left him without ties, *alone*. He had nowhere else to go, but to India, and he no longer wished to stay here. He would ask to be exchanged to another regiment. He would request that this be done at once.

As he started to leave the cemetery, a lady appeared at the iron gate of entrance. She seemed strangely familiar, even at a distance, and as she came near he stopped, but could not speak. Had the sun, moon or stars fallen from the sky, he could not have appeared more like a statue as he looked at her, to assure himself he was not mistaken.

GEORGE AND MARY MEETING IN THE CHURCHYARD

"Am I forgotten, George?" said Mary.

For it *was* Mary Hamilton, still young in looks and girlish in figure, though she was thirty-five now, instead of twenty. But there was a more serious expression upon her face. A deeper, kindlier look, as of one who had learned many lessons in life's school, and profited by them.

She smiled and held out her hand. "Am I forgotten, George?" she asked, while a faint flush overspread her face.

George took both her hands. "Not forgotten, Mary," replied he; "but always remembered, and always loved."

Mary hesitated a moment, then she said, "George, long since, I repented my answer of fifteen years ago. I have learned your worth in all that has been told me of you since."

"Mary, I know it was presumption in me then, and still more so now, to ask you to marry a poor Lieutenant, with no prospects whatever, still your words give me hope."

"It is not presumption, George. I consider it an honor to marry a noble man like yourself, even with no prospects at all; but have you not received news of your promotion to a higher rank in the army? A letter was sent you before I started."

"It may be that it will come on a mail which is expected at the hotel today, though I did not dream of the honor," replied George, still gazing at Mary, as though he feared the long lost but suddenly restored vision of his youth would vanish, leaving him again desolate.

"And you do not dream, George, of friends who are waiting for you at the hotel, with your appointment as 'Colonel,' in their possession. The Brownes came with me. The Colonel has retired from service and you are to take his place."

"Is it possible?" said the astonished George. "We will hasten back to the hotel; but first let me show you the place where Stephen Wyndham's dust rests; the monument to him, his wife and child, and to the sweetest Kashmirian woman this valley ever knew."

"I have heard all the sad story, George. When Kirza returned she told us all. She gave us the complete history of all these long years."

"And how is Kirza, the faithful soul?" asked Rolston.

"She is well, but very tired. She is no longer young, you know, and Mrs. Browne and I will see that she is provided for during the rest of her life."

"She has earned it, Mary; and Stephen and Irene would have been happy to know that their dear, faithful servant was so well cared for."

"I was coming anyway, to visit Kashmir, and *you*, George, but Kirza's story hastened me. You know I have never used the half of Uncle's money which should have been left to Stephen. I invested it and sent the Mission several anonymous gifts; for I knew he would not accept it otherwise."

"*He* did not mistrust, Mary; but *I* did. It helped them greatly."

"Well now, George, I have made arrangements to rebuild the school. I have already engaged teachers,

and the work our dear friends started shall begin again, and go on in their name. This money, one-half of Uncle's fortune, shall be dedicated to this object."

"Mary, you are a noble woman."

"Not noble, George, and not deserving of praise. I am only doing right. The money belongs, and always has belonged, to Stephen; and now should be devoted to what was the dearest object of his heart."

And so in time arose new buildings, and the Mission was started once more. And again the institution became widely known throughout the country, and in India also. It was called the "Wyndham Memorial School and Chapel." The poor were welcome without money. But children of wealthy citizens of the capital, as well as sons and daughters of the English officers, were glad to be received at a fair price. Still, it always remained a missionary benefaction, dedicated to the Brotherhood of Man.

Chapter XXVII.

When Self is Dead

When George Rolston and Mary Hamilton had consulted Colonel and Mrs. Browne at the hotel, they decided to go to Serinagur and be married at once, by the Chaplain there. Then they would return to India and make arrangements for rebuilding the Mission and establishing it on a firm basis:

Their future home would be in India. However, they would often return to the beautiful Vale of Kashmir, to keep an oversight on matters there.

When they looked over the papers left by Stephen Wyndham they found a note addressed to George. This enclosed the strange writing, which Stephen had found beside him on his table, just before the tragic death of his wife and child. It was, as he had said, from the Wise Man of Leh. They read Wyndham's message first.

"My dear friend," it ran, "I feel a presentiment that I soon shall follow my beloved wife. With a vision growing clearer as I leave this physical plane, I foresee that you are not to be left lonely behind us. I see that you and Mary Hamilton will be united at no distant day. It has been made plain to me that you and she will take up the work which I am laying

down. May the remainder of this earth-life, for you, be as happy as has been the last fifteen years to me. Farewell, dear friend; be the time long or short, we shall meet again."

Then George and Mary opened the oriental appearing document, which had been written by the "Wise man of Leh." This was parchment, and the writing was that of a hand which had mastered the characters of the languages of many lands.

"Greetings from him who was once the Astrologer of Babylon, but in this his last incarnation is known as the 'Wise Man of Leh.'

"To my dear children in spirit, who in that old Babylonian day were called Princess Hamurai (daughter of Nebuchadrezzar) and Cyrus, officer of the Palace Guards; but now are known as 'Stephen and Irene,' teachers and workers in the great cause of the Brotherhood of Man. My children, this present day in life's school, for you, now draws toward its end. The sunlight is fading, the shadows of your nights' rest in the Heaven world are gathering. Lay aside your school books, put away your lessons, leave all earthly hopes and plans, and prepare to return to the spirits' true home. There, for a period not reckoned by earth's measurement of time, you shall assimilate and digest the experiences of your latest incarnation.

"In that old Babylonian day of life you both were proud, haughty, selfish and ambitious. But in later lives, and in the heavenly rest between them you have progressed. In this school-day you have had much of what the world calls disappointment, loss and sor-

row. But the short sight of man knows not that these are gracious and kindly heaven-sent teachers, to turn our feet in the right direction.

"Each tear that falls, each privation that stings, is not a punishment; it is not an undeserved affliction; but a *lesson,* the result of some action in a previous life, which must bring to us its effect. What we sow we *must* reap, my children; those other lives held their deeds, and we cannot escape the result. An Absolute power has justly and mercifully arranged that we shall live and learn, and profit by each and every experience, till at last the spirit arrives at perfection and returns to the Fount of Divinity from which it set out.

Despise not any brother, no matter how low, how wicked he may be. Observe one rule only: *love him* and *lift him higher.* Where *he* stands today *we* stood once. As we shall progress till we have reached the condition of the Archangels, so our weak brother and sister will journey higher, till they stand where we are, and higher still; for upward ever, is the trend of the immortal soul.

"Kill out self. Live for others. This is the path to Immortal Life. When the life-wave first started downward from the Supreme, the Absolute Power, it began in the world of Virgin Spirit, the next to the highest of the seven worlds or planes. It had *Divine* Consciousness, but not *Self*-Consciousness. This faculty, together with soul power, and the Creative Mind, must be obtained by Evolution. When the Virgin Spirit was immersed in Divine Consciousness, it was

in a deep trance, and this was called the First Period of the soul's existence. In the Second Period of its existence it progressed to a condition resembling a dreamless sleep. In the Third Period the soul advanced to the Dream Stage. It was beginning to awake. And in the middle of the Fourth Period, which man has now reached, it has attained to a full waking consciousness.

"During the remaining half of the Fourth Period and the Three remaining Periods, (for there are seven in all) man's consciousness will expand so as to include all of the six worlds or planes above the physical world. Man passed through these worlds in his descent from spirit into matter, *unconsciously*. He was guided and cared for in his helpless state by higher Beings, appointed by the Supreme Power of all. These higher Beings were the Seven Planetary spirits before the Throne of the Supreme, the 'Absolute,' of whom all we can know at present is, that *He exists*, and that his plans are wise and benevolent.

"When the spirit was far enough advanced, these guiding, controlling, watchful Beings opened his physical eyes. They gradually, in long periods of time, created for him, this perfect physical body, after he had passed through the mineral, the vegetable and animal stage.

"At last they developed his powers, so that he is, today, able to conquer many of the world's forces. And man will progress through the other three planes, gaining wonderful new powers as he goes, until the night of Creation comes, when we return to the Abso-

lute and rest with him, awaiting the beginning of a new day of Creation. Then onward again; onward and upward! For during the long night of Creation (when the scheme of this present Universe has evolved to its conclusion) other Universes will be projected into space by the Supreme Power, for our spirit's education.

"My dear children, need you grieve, need you shrink, when I tell you one little day of earth is over, and that you must prepare for the night? Ah, no; but gather up your toys, put them away cheerfully, and go to your rest, leaning upon the Supreme One, as the child falls asleep in its father's or mother's arms. For the morning will break again. New joys, new sorrows, new loves, new relationships will come when the night is over. Wonderful new powers and new senses await you.

"In some of the Leaders of the Race, in the great Masters, the Adepts, these wonderful powers are already developed. *They* control forces of earth which other men fear; they perform apparently superhuman acts, which less advanced men regard with awe; but which are really but the result of their progressed powers.

"*They* can function upon the astral plane. *They* can communicate with the so-called 'Dead.' You, too, with all mankind, will gradually attain to this state.

"I have spoken of the great 'Night of Brahm,' when he recalls the entire universe into his being, for a rest, until a new system is evolved. But there are

lesser nights. There are periods of rest, between the spirit's days of activity.

"Such a lesser night came when Lemuria went, by great volcanic fires. Another night came when Atlantis disappeared, when floods fell upon the earth, when inner volcanic action tore out the bed of the earth, and man, who had reached our own condition, whose powers were even more wonderful, was destroyed. But the souls of the *leaders* of the Race were reincarnated upon a new continent, and are today advancing to an intellectual and spiritual condition, which will be higher than our scheme has yet known.

"There are *signs* preceding these earthly nights. By these signs you may know, my children, that another night draws near. Before one of these nights; before one of what the world calls 'catastrophes,' there are unusual events. A terrible world-wide war will depopulate the earth. This will be followed by epidemics in various places, by famine, by hunger, yes by starvation. These messengers of a world's destruction precede the end. Signs shall be seen in the sky. Stars shall fall from heaven, when the appointed time approaches. Then when the earth has become depopulated, when but a comparative few remain, either by flood or volcanic action or by a heavenly wandering body, or by conjunction of all, will the end come, the end of one of the Seven Periods of time.

"Three have already passed. The fourth is near its end. So regret not your passing. We are each a part of an eternal plan. What seems *ill,* is good

in disguise. What seems *mistake,* is the working out of a scheme for our final well-being.

"The time draws near. Nation shall rise against nation, not knowing why. War, world wide, pestilence, famine, wait just ahead. You, my children, will pass out a little before. Be thankful, be glad that you are called before these days come.

"The Occultist has known for ages, what has been, and is, and will be. While the scientist delves in the valleys, thinking he has discovered new and wonderful truths, the Yogi, the Adept, stands serenely upon the lofty mountain peaks of knowledge where he has solved the riddle of the Universe.

"We, the thoughts of the Absolute sent downward through the lowest depths of materialism, are returning, enriched by the experiences through which we have passed, to the region of Divine Spirit. We went forth an unconscious part of the whole. We return a self-conscious identity to rest in the Supreme.

"Shall we criticise the method by which we have attained to immortality? Shall we grieve over these trivial experiences in life's school? Leave them behind, my children, and pass on. To you I will give the vision which sees the world's mad rush, its devouring greed, and selfish seeking, as it appears to those who dwell above, guiding the destinies of man with their appointed hands.

"To those great Beings, mankind seems as the occupants of an *ant hill,* running wildly around, hurrying hither and thither, seeking the objects of their mistaken ambition, either pleasure, or wealth or

fame. They are ever losing sight of life's first and greatest object, life's one end. O little ants! pause! pause in your unthinking, scrambling and mad career. Ask yourselves these three questions: Whence came we? Why are we here? and whither do we go? You do not have to remain in blind ignorance. The answer is waiting for those who seek to know."

The contents of this document were a revelation to George and Mary. For so, in a lesser degree, had *they* lived, unknowing, unreasoning, uncaring. But as they folded the paper to lay it away, life's great truth had at last dawned upon them.

They had risen to a higher plane of thought, never more to return to the old world where they had lived so long; where the pursuit of riches and of pleasure, the working out of selfish desires, chained their souls to the lower existence. As the chicken breaks its shell and steps forth into a wonderful new world. so for them, the old thought-incrustations were shattered. The darkness, the narrow boundaries of the materialistic world were left behind. They had passed from its limitations into a new, a broader life.

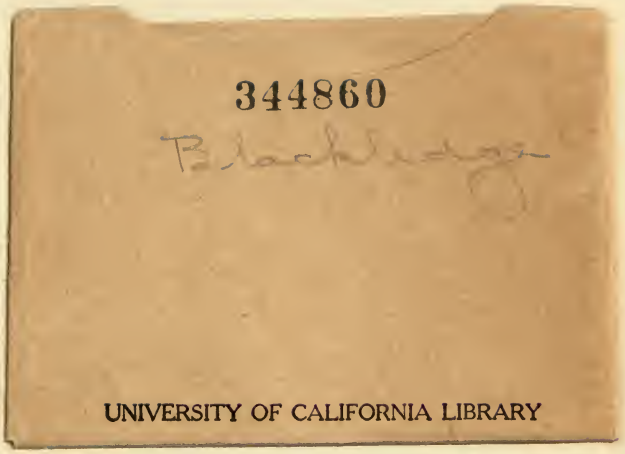
And so it was, in the future which opened before these two, that the entire aspect of life was changed. As year after year passed, they lived but for *others;* they watched over the Mission in this corner of the world. They returned often to the village of Sindh in the lovely vale. On the first anniversary of the rebuilding of the Mission, a strange light shone in the chapel at midnight. Several of the inhabitants who were passing thus late to their homes, reported un-

earthly forms visible as they glanced through the windows. One or two insisted that a Babylonian or Egyptian Princess, they knew not which, walked up and down the aisles of the chapel. Upon her neck they declared they saw the Amulet, which had once hung upon the altar cross. While by her side walked a tall youth in soldiers' garb, a uniform of long-past centuries.

Others, who passed the Chapel a little later, said that what *they* saw was nothing of the kind. But that their astonished eyes did behold the loved Brother and Sister who had lived among them for fifteen happy years. That beside them walked the Angel Child; and that behind them followed Miriam, the Kashmirian girl, with her long lost young lover. And that upon the altar glowed and gleamed and flashed with unearthly fires the strange Egyptian serpent necklace, *the Amulet.*

These reports were given to George and Mary on their annual visit. They did not discourage the belief of the childlike Kashmirians. Instead they sought to use all these things as a means to an end. They endeavored to hold before the people the example of those three, who had given the years of one short life to the Brotherhood of Man.

They, themselves, lived henceforth only for this; for in them, as in those departed ones, "Self was Dead."

The End.

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